DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 426 911 SO 028 750

AUTHOR	Lokan, Jan, Ed.
TITLE	Describing Learning: Implementation of Curriculum Profiles in Australian Schools 1986-1996. ACER Research Monograph No. 50.
INSTITUTION	Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne.
ISBN	ISBN-0-86431-224-5
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	463p.; "Contributing Authors: Ken Eltis, Tracey Frigo, Neville Grace, David Howes, Shantha E Jacob; Jan Lokan, Christine Ludwig, Suzanne Mellon, Bruce Mowbray, Glen Pullen, Robert Randll, Jeffiner Stehn, Margaret Willis, Margaret Wu."
AVAILABLE FROM	Australian Council for Educational Research Ltd., 19 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell, Melbourne, Victoria, 3124.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Collected Works - General (020) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; Comparative Education; *Curriculum; *Curriculum Evaluation; Curriculum Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Instructional Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Questionnaires
IDENTIFIERS	*Australia

ABSTRACT

This book contains information about the implementation processes of curricular reform in each Australian state and territory and views about these, obtained from several sources as part of a study commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) in mid-1995. Each State and Territory Education Department was brought into the project through having a curriculum officer or other knowledgeable person(s) prepare a chapter for the book. The primary focus of the project was on implementation of state variations of the national curriculum profiles rather than on the related curriculum statements. In addition, a survey was carried out in a random sample of schools across Australia to collect information from principals and teachers about the practical aspects of implementation. Site visits to schools in most Australian states and territories were also conducted. Findings show a range of implementation strategies with approaches to and timelines for implementation varying widely. The book is divided into five sections. The first section is the introduction with chapters: (1) "Overview of Developments with the National Statements and Profiles to 1993"; and (2) "Summary of the 1992-93 ACER Calibration Studies." Section 2, "State and Territory Initiatives," offers: (1) "The National Agenda in the National Capital" (Margaret Willis); (2) "From Piloting to Mainstreaming: The Northern Territory Journey" (Shantha E Jacob); (3) "Focusing on Learning in New South Wales" (Ken Eltis; Bruce Mowbray); (4) "Implementation of the 'Curriculum and Standards Framework' in Victoria" (David Howes); (5) "Use of National Statements and Profiles in Queensland Schools" (Neville Grace; Christine Ludwig); (6) "Renewing the Curriculum Cycle in South Australia" (Jennifer Stehn); (7) "Statements and Profiles: Making Them 'Our Own' in Western Australia" (Robert Randall); and (8) "Curriculum Review and Renewal in Tasmania" (Glenn Pullen). Section 3 provides "The National Survey of

Schools." Section 4, "The School Visits," describes: (1) "Case Study Methodology"; (2) "General and Underlying Principles"; (3) "Factors in Successful Implementation"; (4) "How to Implement Best Practice Strategies"; and (5) "The Perceived Benefits." Section 5, "Bringing It All Together," offers "Some Good Things Are Happening: 'How Can We Salvage the Situation' Everywhere Else?" Three appendices contain sample reports, a brief to authors of State and Territory Chapters, and questionnaires. (EH)

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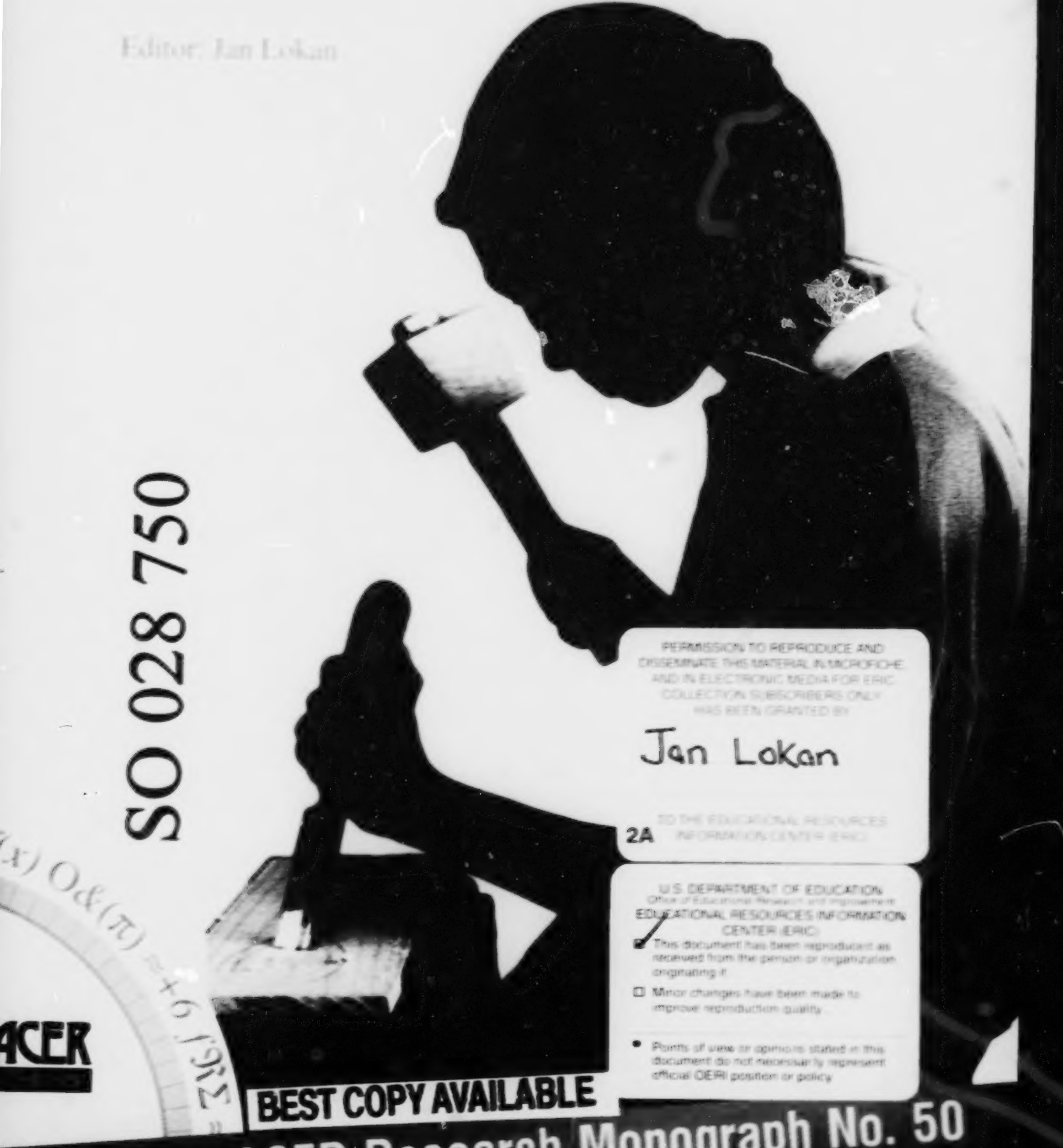
Describing Learning

Implementation of Curriculum Profiles in Australian Schools 1986 – 1996

Editor: Jan Lokan



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1986 - 1996

Editor: Jan Lokan

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ACER PRESS

First published 1997
by The Australian Council for Educational Research Ltd
19 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell, Melbourne, Victoria, 3124

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Printed by Shannon Books Australia Pty Ltd

National Library of Australia

Cataloguing-in-Publication data:

Describing Learning: implementation of curriculum profiles in Australian schools 1986-1996

ISBN 0 86431 224 5

1. Curriculum evaluation - Australia. 2. Grading and marking (Students) - Australia. 3. Education - Australia - Curricula. I. Lokan, Jan. II. Australian Council for Educational Research.

375 0060994

Cover photographs courtesy of Methodist Ladies College, Kew, Victoria and Village School, North Croydon, Victoria.

Executive Summary

Background

In the decade from the mid 1980s to the mid 1990s, some major changes in thinking about curriculum provision in Australian schools occurred. In the first phase we saw unprecedented collaboration between all of Australia's states and territories as the nature and general content for an intended national curriculum were debated. As part of that process, documents (called 'statements') were formulated to present these national goals.

In itself this collaboration was unusual, because education in Australia is constitutionally a state matter. There have previously been long traditions of state-based curricula in our schools and, more recently, curriculum policy determined at school level in many parts of the country. The other unusual aspect of this most recent national effort was the broad range of curriculum areas addressed—eight 'Key Learning Areas' were specified, intending to cover most aspects of typical school curricula in the 1990s. There had been a few earlier attempts to introduce curriculum programs Australia-wide, but these were either in individual subjects or in a smaller range of 'core' areas. These attempts did not result in widespread changes being made in schools.

A very important, and novel, factor for Australian education in the national initiative of the late 1980s and early 1990s was the basic shift to thinking about curricula in terms of student learning outcomes. Some states had been considering this approach in advance of the national project, but to many, and certainly to most schools and teachers, it was very different from the 'input oriented' emphases they were used to. The paradigm shift, from thinking mostly about inputs to students' education to more about what students are learning from their schooling, was sufficiently great that the need for frameworks for assessment and reporting to accompany the statements of national curriculum goals was recognised. Thus national assessment and reporting frameworks, known as 'profiles', were also prepared, which presented sequences of outcomes in several aspects of each learning area, and which were generally more detailed than the statements of learning area goals.

In the next phase of the initiative, since 1993, we have seen much further effort as each of the states and territories decided which parts of the national documents to use and in what form, which parts to modify, how to organise the implementation in their schools and how to support their principals and teachers to cope with the implementation tasks. As would be expected for such a major change in curriculum philosophy, the total process requires time and resources and not all has been 'plain sailing'. Nevertheless, the implementation has been in progress long enough now for there to have been some success stories and for benefits of the approach to have been recognised in practice.

Foci of this book

The book contains information about the implementation processes in each state and territory and views about these, obtained from several sources as part of a study commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) in mid 1995. In general terms, the purpose of the study was 'to research, analyse and report on the effective use of the curriculum profiles for Australian schools, and their role in classroom assessment and reporting of student learning outcomes to teachers, parents and employers'. The project was expected to draw attention to 'assessment and reporting practices and strategies [...] being used effectively in Australian classrooms', including the use and role of testing. There were several more detailed objectives, most of which are apparent in the description of research stages and findings in the remainder of this summary.

Research stages

Documentation of system initiatives

Each State and Territory Education Department was brought into the project through having a curriculum officer or other knowledgeable person(s) prepare a chapter for the book. Authors were provided with guidelines to ensure coverage of the most important antecedents to current initiatives in curriculum, assessment and reporting in their state, as well as the initiatives themselves. Contributors were asked to cover policy development and activities related to implementation of the learning area statements and profiles in the non-government sector as well as in the government sector. The primary focus of the project was on implementation of state variations of the national curriculum profiles rather than on the related curriculum statements. However, it is difficult to focus on one without the other and authors were encouraged to describe what was being done with the curriculum statements also. The chapters, which can be found in Section 2 of the book, were written during 1996, but were updated as necessary early in 1997.

Survey of principals' and teachers' views and practices

In the second stage of the research, a survey was carried out in a random sample of schools across Australia. The purpose of the survey was to collect information, on a fairly general level, from principals and teachers about the practical aspects of implementation. The survey was also a vehicle for identifying common implementation strategies, common concerns among teachers about difficulties in implementation, and commonly perceived benefits of the 'student learning outcomes' approach to education embodied in the statements and profiles. Responses were received from 220 schools from all states, territories and sectors, with the exception of government schools in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory which were not included in the design. Useable responses were received from 208 principals (102 primary, 106 secondary) and 553 teachers. The teacher respondents were made up of 264 from primary and 289 from secondary schools; 339 from government, 154 from Catholic and 60 from independent schools. The survey, which is reported in Section 3 of this book, took place in term 2 of 1996.

Site visits to schools

The third stage of the project involved visits to schools from most Australian states and territories. The schools were selected for specific reasons, but collectively to provide as rich a picture as possible of the aspects of profiles implementation regarded by principals and teachers as successful and the aspects regarded as most likely to be associated with problems. Altogether, 26 schools were visited, mostly during term 3 of 1996. During the visits, a range of teachers from 13 primary and 13 secondary schools was interviewed, sometimes in a group situation and sometimes individually. Principals were invited to join in the interviews if they wished, and many did so. Section 4 of this book contains several chapters based on the school visits.

Main results

State and territory initiatives

Approximately half of the book is taken up by the eight chapters commissioned from the states and territories (hereafter referred to as 'states'). In all cases the chapters are the work of the contributing authors, with a minimum of editing. It would be doing these contributions much injustice to attempt to summarise them here. What we have is a great deal of detail about the approach to implementation taken in each state, documented more thoroughly in this book than in any other collective description to date of this major curriculum and assessment reform in Australia.

In the states' chapters we see that the approaches to and timelines for implementation vary widely. They range from decisions in some places to put implementation 'on hold' pending outcomes of reviews, to virtually full scale implementation in others. While most Australian educators will have been aware in general terms that such differences exist, the chapters here provide the background to decisions taken; discussion of reasons why certain pathways were chosen or not chosen; some frank references to difficulties faced at the head or central office level; details of strategies used to 'spread the message'; support provided to teachers as they have begun and then continued their efforts to grapple with outcomes-based teaching, learning and assessment; descriptions of resource materials prepared, and so on. In short, the chapters each present a picture of the state of play as at the beginning of 1997, together with very comprehensive documentation of the people, events and circumstances which moulded each picture.

Survey findings

Factual information

Factual information reported by principals in response to the survey, such as when implementation of curriculum profiles began in their schools, in which learning areas, and with what kinds of emphases within the learning areas, followed closely what was known about implementation policies across the states. Emphases listed in the questionnaire were familiarisation, planning and programming, assessing according to profile outcome statements, and reporting to parents.

- Length of experience with profiles

  The most common year for beginning implementation of the curriculum profiles in schools was 1994 (40 per cent). About three quarters of the schools became involved with implementation in either 1994 or 1995.

- Implementation emphases

  In primary schools, by far the most common learning areas for implementation in both 1995 and 1996 were English and mathematics. In secondary schools the emphases reported by our respondents were noticeably more uniform across learning areas, though English and mathematics still had a slight edge. Close to half of the responding principals reported that their schools were implementing profiles to some degree in all eight learning areas in 1996. These schools were mostly in Victoria and South Australia, and most were secondary schools.

  Primary school principals reported a decrease in emphasis on familiarisation and programming from 1995 to 1996, with a corresponding increase in emphasis on assessment and reporting.

  In secondary schools, from the principals' responses, the emphases in 1995 were almost entirely on familiarisation and programming, in about equal proportions. The principals reported a strong shift in emphasis in 1996 from familiarisation to programming and also some shift to assessment and reporting. The most noticeable difference in implementation stages between primary and secondary schools was in the use of profiles for reporting purposes, which was being done in many more primary than secondary schools.

  The teachers' responses were sometimes rather different, in that higher proportions of our teacher respondents tended to say that they were still at the familiarisation stage in 1996 than their principals had reported for the school as a whole. Some of this discrepancy was probably due to differences in perception of what 'familiarisation' actually involved, as it was left to respondents to interpret the emphases listed. Some discrepancies of this nature could also be expected because the teacher respondents were not selected to be formally representative of their schools. (Three Teacher Questionnaires were sent to each school, and principals were asked to distribute these to teachers with a range of experience of working with the profiles and also, particularly in secondary schools, from a range of learning areas.)

  The teacher respondents who were using the profiles for reporting purposes, either in 1995 or 1996 or both, used them at year levels that were spread reasonably uniformly across all levels to Year 10, apart from Years 4, 5 and 9, at which less reporting in terms of the profile outcomes was done.

Factual information with evaluations of usefulness

Several sections of the questionnaires asked about the incidence of a range of implementation aspects occurring in schools, together with ratings of how useful teachers had found, or were finding, these.

- Implementation strategies

  Almost all primary and secondary teachers reported that documentation to aid implementation had been provided in their schools (there were occasional complaints about complexity, too much jargon and too many documents); about two-thirds reported that valuable meetings with key staff members and collaborative planning with their colleagues had occurred; and three-quarters of primary teachers and two-thirds of secondary teachers said that teachers at their schools had been supported to attend training and development programs. All of these strategies were regarded as highly useful. Many teachers said that they would appreciate the opportunity to work more closely with another school or group of schools. More primary teachers than secondary teachers had been supported by having pupil-free days or relief teachers provided. Many more primary teachers than secondary teachers (60 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively) said that there was a key leadership position in their school to support their work in implementing the profiles. Existence of such a position was also perceived as highly useful.

  Many schools, as at mid 1996, were still to implement any computer technology to aid teachers in their record-keeping and reporting work. Even in schools where principals reported that computers and software were available for these purposes, teachers often did not know about these and fewer than a quarter had tried to use them. Those who had worked with technological aids typically rated them as useful or highly so.

- Professional development

  The most useful professional development that teachers had received was clearly in the areas of curriculum mapping and aligning, program planning and assessment methods. Teachers in both primary and secondary schools indicated that further professional development programs are needed across many aspects associated with the use of profiles. More primary than secondary teachers wanted more help with program planning, while more secondary than primary teachers expressed the need for training in assessment methods and in reporting to parents. Approximately equal proportions (50 per cent or more) of primary and secondary teachers wanted more training in classroom practices, in assessment according to the profile outcome statements, and in use of technology.

- Reports based on profiles

  A majority of teachers rated reports based on profiles as 'quite' or 'highly' useful for themselves and other teachers, but as 'marginal' or of no use to parents and employers. Teachers whose involvement with the profiles went beyond familiarisation and teachers who were more highly committed to the profiles approach (see next section) were significantly more likely to rate the profiles as useful for reporting purposes.

Attitudes, perceptions and evaluative comment

Other parts of the questionnaires assessed teachers' attitudes or asked for opinions, perceptions and evaluative comment associated with profiles implementation in systems and schools.

- Commitment to a profiles approach

  Eighty per cent of primary principals rated their school's commitment to profiles relative to other school priorities in 1996 as medium to high, whereas 75 per cent of secondary principals rated their school's commitment as medium to low. A similar, but not as marked, difference occurred among teachers. Overall, 30 per cent of teachers rated their personal commitment to profiles as high, 40 per cent rated this as medium and 30 per cent said that their commitment was low.

- Perceived benefits associated with use of profiles in schools

  Teachers very much appreciated the opportunity afforded them by the statements and profiles to engage in curriculum review processes at their schools. The majority recognised the rationale for the change in philosophy to focus on student learning rather than on what was 'taught', and could see the benefits for themselves and their students arising from this. The statements and profiles had provided the impetus for them to review the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of teaching, which was regarded as a benefit by the majority of our teacher respondents. The value of a common framework for reporting was recognised by more than half of the primary teachers but by only about a quarter of the secondary teachers.

- Problems

  The amount of time required to use the profiles as a basis for programming, assessment and reporting was identified as a problem by almost 90 per cent of our teacher respondents. Insufficient resources and training opportunities were indicated by two thirds of respondents, as was a concern that parents would find the profiles difficult to understand. Sixty per cent of teachers responded that the implementation timeline was a problem for them.

  Schools were sampled in this project to present as close as possible to a national picture—there were insufficient schools sampled in the smaller states to produce accurate state by state results. Nevertheless, there were trends apparent in the identification of problems to suggest state differences, which are to be expected given the different stages of implementation across the states. For example, the issue of parental understanding of profiles was more of a concern at the time of the survey in South Australia than elsewhere. Their state's timeline for implementation appeared to be more of a concern to teachers in Tasmania and the Northern Territory and less of a concern in Western Australia. Concern about availability of resources was lower in Tasmania than elsewhere.

  The incidence and nature of problems identified were very similar for teachers at primary and secondary levels. The main difference by level was that primary teachers were worried about the number of outcomes they had to cover for their students across eight learning areas whereas secondary teachers were concerned about the task of recording outcomes for the large number of students they teach within a learning area.

> Some teachers commented that the lack of certainty about commitment to the profiles approach either at school or system level in some places constituted a problem for them. They expressed reluctance to become too involved, in case there might be yet another policy shift. This sentiment is summed up in the following quote from one of the teacher respondents:
>
> *Teachers need to believe that these changes and the related time and work to implement them won't again be thrown out the door for yet again a NEWER scheme!!*

Findings from school visits

From the outset, an aim of the project was to identify and describe examples of successful practice in the implementation of the profiles-based approach to assessment and reporting. The interviews carried out during the school visits enabled more detailed probing of these practices, as well as providing insights on ways to go about successful implementation. It became clear during the course of the interviews that, in schools where implementation was proceeding in a climate of acceptance and progress, several key factors were in place. Many other factors were also identified which, while facilitating teachers' work with the profiles, did not seem to be as necessary to schools' experiences of success with the approach.

It is not possible to convey the richness of teachers' comments about their experiences with implementation in a brief summary. Readers who are interested in the practical detail will find much to inform—and entertain—them in the case study chapters. All that will be presented here are some conclusions about teachers' reactions to the implementation and lists of the factors identified as either crucial or important to successful implementation, which can be considered in the light of teachers' responses to the survey about benefits and needs they had perceived in their schools.

Impact of implementation

Teachers reported their early recognition that the adoption of an outcomes-based approach would have very wide ramifications. Most asserted that a re-organisation of their whole professional lives had been brought about by the implementation. They believe that the adoption of the profiles and statements requires, at the very least:

- an audit of the entire curriculum, either by them or by the system;
- a complete reworking of their planning and delivery of the classroom curriculum;
- a critical examination of the suitability of the outcomes for their students, in the context of their knowledge about how learning progresses;
- a new, and quite different, set of assumptions to be incorporated in assessment and reporting processes which, in turn, will require a high level of justification and explanation to (as well as education of) parents;

- a level of explicitness and collaboration with colleagues in planning, pedagogy and assessment which has not previously existed.

These constitute a substantial program of change.

Essential factors for successful implementation

The following factors seem to have assumed the status of 'essential pre-conditions' to effective implementation:

- congruence of the state or territory's curriculum to the version of the profiles with which teachers have been issued:

  where congruence is slight, teachers see the task of implementing the profiles as virtually impossible;

- teachers' belief that the profiles approach is 'there to stay' in their system and school:

  some of those who believe implementation is not inevitable hope that, if they ignore the impetus, 'it will go away';

- presence of a 'teacher leader' within the school:

  such teachers tend to have a personal commitment to the goals and benefits they see as being obtained by the implementation of the profiles; they are familiar with the structures and jargon of the statements and profiles and translate this familiarity into documentation and teacher talk for colleagues, which in turn increases the acceptance level and time for other staff in the school;

- sufficient time for teachers, individually and in collegial groups, to talk through the necessary changes:

  in places where exemplary work has been done, vast quantities of time have been invested; this time has typically been supplied by teachers staying at school for long hours after classes are finished, often several nights a week, for several terms on end.

In general, where these four factors exist, staff members think that the teaching and learning experiences of staff and students in their school have improved as a result of the implementation of an outcomes-based approach. At the time of our visits, these factors seemed less likely to apply to teachers and their professional environments in secondary schools than in primary schools.

Other facilitating factors

Other factors which appear to have a lesser, but still significant, impact on successful implementation are:

- useability of documentation from the system:

  difficulty of language used in documents arriving in schools and changing documentation and parameters as systems evolve their positions have been problems for many teachers;

- reluctant and tardy recognition of teachers' professional work and efforts:

  teachers say that recognition of the complexity and scale of the changes being sought (and practised) is too slow in forthcoming; in this context they say the pay-off for them is their professional pride, enhanced collegiality, and the mounting evidence from their students' learning that this is an innovation that must be retained;

- teachers' age, pedagogic confidence, training and sense of trust in their colleagues:

  teachers' capacity to accept the challenge and work with the concepts and practicalities are affected by this cluster of factors, though the effect is a variable one;

- a school's population and community support:

  schools with very varied populations, or with populations where only an indifferent interest in education is shown by the students and/or parents, have particular difficulties with such an innovation;

- how much flexibility teachers perceive is possible or allowed them in their interpretation of the profiles in relation to all stages of the teaching and learning process, including assessment and reporting:

  this is particularly significant where problems with other factors are present;

- availability of supporting technology:

  technology is not regarded by many teachers as being a very important factor in exploring the concepts involved, but poor technology, or the inability of the systems to provide the required level or kind of technology for effective reporting either back to the systems or to parents, is seen as a lack of commitment by the systems-something which will make implementation harder than is necessary (this appears to be a bigger problem for secondary than for primary schools).

Some final words

A further factor that became clear from the interviews was that there were some dissonances between the overall pictures presented in the state chapters with what was actually happening (or not happening) in schools. One of the most striking findings from the school visits was that there is still a long way to go before implementation, in the systems where it is being undertaken, can be considered to be fully accomplished.

We need to remember here that most schools had been engaged in implementation for less than three years at the time the survey and school visits were carried out. It would be doing all parties a disservice to expect such a massive change as implied by the outcomes-based approach behind the statements and profiles to be fully implemented in under five years. In keeping with the focus of much of the research, the final words of this summary are being allowed to a teacher:

> [The needs are for]
>
> - TIME to implement and digest information;
> - HUMAN & MONETARY RESOURCES given to schools to assist effective implementation; [not just ...] the massive amount of paper warfare teachers are asked to digest and then take on board;

and to a principal:

> The keys to success are: (i) don't try to do too much too soon, and (ii) make sure that all staff understand the changes being implemented and are involved in planning for change—collaborative change unites, imposed change divides.

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Glossary

Australian territories and states, with school grade levels

ACT	Australian Capital Territory	Secondary school begins at Year 7
NT	Northern Territory	Secondary school begins at Year 8
NSW	New South Wales	Secondary school begins at Year 7
QLD	Queensland	Secondary school begins at Year 8
SA	South Australia	Secondary school begins at Year 8
VIC	Victoria	Secondary school begins at Year 7
TAS	Tasmania	Secondary school begins at Year 7
WA	Western Australia	Secondary school begins at Year 8

Compulsory schooling begins at age 6. Most students begin a full-time pre-primary year at age 5. This year is referred to by different names in different states. Some use K ('Kindergarten'); some use P ('Preparatory'); one uses R ('Reception') and one uses T ('Transition').

Acronyms

ACACA	Australian Curriculum and Assessment Certification Authorities
ACAP	Australian Cooperative Assessment Program
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACP	Across-Curriculum Perspectives (ACT)
AEC	Australian Education Council
AEU	Australian Education Union
AISV	Association of Independent Schools of Victoria
ATESOL	Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
BOS	Board of Studies (NSW, Vic.)
CBASS	Computer Based Administrative System for Schools (NT)
CDC	Curriculum Development Corporation
CECV	Catholic Education Commission of Victoria
CEO	Catholic Education Office Chief Education Officer Chief Executive Officer

CIA	Common Instruments of Assessment (NT)
CSF	Curriculum and Standards Framework (Vic.)
CURASS	Curriculum and Assessment Committee
DACC	Department Advisory Curriculum Committee (ACT)
DART	Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers
DEA	Department of Education and The Arts (Tas.)
DECCD	Department of Education, Community and Cultural Development (Tas.)
DECS	Department for Education and Children's Services (SA)
DEETYA	Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
DSE	Department of School Education (NSW)
DSE	Directorate of School Education (Vic.) *Note:* this department changed its name to 'Department of Education' during 1996
EBA	Enterprise Bargaining Agreement
EDWA	Education Department of Western Australia
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESUs	Essential Skills and Understandings (SA)
HPE	Health and Physical Education
ISB	Independent Schools Board
KILOs	Key Intended Literacy Outcomes (Tas.)
KINOs	Key Intended Numeracy Outcomes (Tas.)
KLA	Key Learning Area
KLAC	Key Learning Area Committee (Vic)
KLARC	Key Learning Area Reference Committee (Qld)
LAP	Learning Assessment Project (Vic)
LBOTE	Language Backgrounds other than English
LOTE	Languages other than English
MAP	Multilevel Assessment Program (NT)
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MOVEET	Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training
MSA	Monitoring Student Achievement (SA)
MSE	Monitoring Standards in Education (WA)
NBEET	National Board of Employment, Education and Training
NESB	Non-English speaking background
NPDP	National Professional Development Program
NTBOS	Northern Territory Board of Studies

NTDE	Northern Territory Department of Education
NLLIA	National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia
PALS/SALS	Primary and Secondary Access to Languages via Satellite (Vic.)
PD	Professional development
PE	Physical Education
QATs	Quality Assessment Tasks (SA)
QCPCA	Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens Associations
QLSP	Queensland Levels of Student Performance
QSCO	Queensland Schools Curriculum Office
QTU	Queensland Teachers Union
ROSAWG	Reporting on Student Achievement Working Group (SA)
RRG	Review Reference Group (SA)
SAASSO	South Australian Association of State Schools Organisation
SAIT	South Australian Institute of Teachers
SAM	Schools Assessment Module (Qld)
SOSE	Studies of Society and Environment
SPS	Student Performance Standards (Qld)
SSABSA	Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia
STEPS	Science and Technology Education in Primary Schools (Vic.)
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TASSAB	Tasmanian Secondary Assessment Board
TCE	Tasmanian Certificate of Education
TECL	Tasmanian Education Consortium Ltd
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VES	Vocational Entry Syllabuses (Tas.)
WACSSO	Western Australian Council of State School Organisations

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Acknowledgements

The project which has resulted in this book was funded by the Curriculum Developments Projects Program of the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

The book has relied on input from many sources, primarily the authors of the state and territory chapters, the members of the ACER research team and more than 200 schools Australia-wide. The contributions of the state and territory authors are gratefully acknowledged, especially for their frankness, thoughtfulness and thoroughness. These chapters provide a valuable record for curriculum theorists, for people who are interested in the dynamics of major curriculum reform, and probably, in years to come, for curriculum historians.

From the ACER team, Tracey Frigo and Jan Lokan were responsible for the survey, and the school visits were carried out by Suzanne Mellor and Tracey Frigo. All three contributed to the preparation of the ACER sections of the book. Thanks are extended also to a further ACER staff member, Margaret Wu, for her contribution to the writing of Chapter 2.

Advice throughout the project was provided by members of the Management Committee, who are acknowledged individually elsewhere. The views expressed in the book do not necessarily represent views of the Management Committee or of the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Some of the most valuable input to the book was provided by principals and teachers. The contributions of all who responded to the survey, and particularly of those who took part in the interviews during the school visits, were very much appreciated. Their responses and comments provide many insights from which all can learn about the practical aspects of major curriculum reform. In recognition of their conscientious, professional and important input a copy of the book is being provided to each of the schools visited, as listed below.

Aberfoyle Park PS, Heysen Campus (SA)
Berry Springs Primary School (NT)
Christchurch Grammar School, Melbourne (Vic.)
Fairview Primary School (WA)
Hackham East Primary School (SA)
Hackham South Primary School (SA)
Huonvale Primary School (Tas.)
Kalamunda Primary School (WA)
Manorvale Primary School (Vic.)
Mary McKillop School, Portland (Vic.)
Sacred Heart Primary School, Ulverstone (Tas.)
St Joseph's Primary School, Coleraine (Vic.)
St Kilda Park Primary School (Vic.)
St Thomas More School, Campbelltown (NSW)

Alice Springs High School (NT)
Anzac Hill Junior High School (NT)
Bullsbrook District High School (WA)
Coodanup Senior High School (WA)
Darwin High School (NT)
Dripstone High School (NT)
Edmund Rice College, Wollongong (NSW)
Jamieson Park Secondary College (Vic.)
Kyneton Secondary College (Vic.)
Meningie Area School (SA)
Northern Territory Correspondence School (NT)
Rosebery District High School (Tas.)
St Virgil's College, Hobart (Tas.)

Foreword: Project Brief and Organisation of the Book

In mid 1995, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) to undertake a research project on the 'Assessment and Use of Profiles' in Australian schools. By now, early in 1997, there will be few educators in Australia who are not familiar with what is meant by 'profiles' in this context. For non-Australian readers or for Australians not directly involved in education: 'profiles' refers to the frameworks, in eight main areas of school learning, which were developed nationally in the early 1990s as an aid to assessment and reporting of student progress. The first chapter of this book contains a description of the profiles and other related documents. It also gives a brief account of events leading up to their development and subsequent implementation in schools in most parts of Australia.

Purpose of research project

In general terms, the purpose of the project was 'to research, analyse and report on the effective use of the curriculum profiles for Australian schools, and their role in classroom assessment and reporting of student learning outcomes to teachers, parents and employers'. The project was expected to draw attention to 'assessment and reporting practices and strategies [...] being used effectively in Australian classrooms', including the use and role of testing.

Specifically, the research was to cover the following:

- system initiatives to support teachers' use of profiles, including the provision of professional development activities and resource materials;
- the current situation (that is, in 1996) for teachers in the implementation of the curriculum profiles, including how teachers are using them, their understanding of them, and problems that they may be experiencing with them;
- the use in schools of standardised and diagnostic testing,
- how 'key competencies' are embedded in everyday classroom activities in the compulsory years of schooling, and ways in which they can be incorporated into assessment and reporting strategies;
- the use of the curriculum profiles for reporting of student outcomes to teachers, parents and employers;
- reporting practices and strategies that are being used effectively around Australia; and

- the use of technologies which have been developed to support implementation of the profiles.

A Management Committee, comprising representatives of governntent, Catholic and independent teachers associations, the National Schools Network, Departments of Education and DEETYA, was formed in early 1996 to oversee the progress of the research. The project was undertaken in several stages, beginning towards the end of 1995. The research in schools was undertaken during terms 2 and 3 of 1996.

Research stages

Documentation of system initiatives

Given that education in Australia is mandated as a state responsibility, ACER aimed to involve the State and Territory Education Departments as much as possible in the project. Accordingly, in the first stage, an invitation was sent to each of the six State and two Territory Departments of Education to nominate a knowledgeable person (or persons) who could be commissioned to prepare a chapter on current initiatives in curriculum, assessment and reporting in their systems. Although the project was intended to focus primarily on implementation of the national curriculum profiles, we felt that the picture would be incomplete without knowledge of what was being done with the accompanying curriculum statements.[1] Further, the picture would be richer and easier to understand state by state if any previous recent work involving an 'outcomes-based' or 'standards referenced' approach were described.

Broad guidelines incorporating all of the above aspects were prepared at ACER and sent to the Departments to pass on to the commissioned authors. A copy of these guidelines is included in Appendix 2. The commissioned authors were mostly senior curriculum officers, or similar, from the government Departments of Education. Each contributor was asked to cover policy development and activities related to implementation of the statements and profiles in the non-government sectors in their state or territory, as well as in the government sector.

Eight of the chapters in this book are the result of this first stage of the project. Draft chapters were received from contributors in mid 1996, revised for clarification purposes during term 3, and updated as necessary early in 1997 to reflect developments that occurred late in 1996. The chapters, then, may be regarded as up-to-date to the end of 1996. In all cases the chapters are the work of the contributing authors, with a minimum of editing. A few changes were made for reasons of style. In recognition that usage of linguistic features such as capital letters in publication titles or in naming of learning areas varies from department to department, such points of style have been left as submitted in the authors' manuscripts.

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[1] The nature of the curriculum statements and profiles is explained in the next chapter.

Survey of teacher views and practices

In the second stage of the research, a survey was carried out in a random sample of schools across Australia. The purpose of the survey was to collect information on a fairly general level from principals and teachers about the practical aspects of implementation. The survey was also a vehicle for identifying common implementation strategies, common concerns among teachers about difficulties in implementation, and commonly perceived benefits of the 'student learning outcomes' approach to education embodied in the statements and profiles.

Site visits to schools

The third stage of the project, and in many ways the most interesting, involved visits to schools from most Australian states and territories. The schools were selected for specific reasons, but collectively to provide as rich a picture as possible of the aspects of profiles implementation regarded by principals and teachers as successful and the aspects regarded as most fraught with problems. From the outset, it has been an aim of this book to describe examples of successful practice in the implementation of the profiles-based approach to assessment and reporting. Another aim has been to draw some research-based conclusions to guide education systems and schools in their continuing endeavours with the approach. The visits to schools, during which in-depth interviews were carried out with a range of school staff, were regarded as the most likely source of useful insights for practitioners.

Organisation of the report

To set the scene for the state and territory chapters, the first two chapters in the book contain some detail of events in Australian education from approximately 1986 to 1993. There are also brief references to relevant occurrences in the preceding two decades. The nature and structure of the statements and profiles are described in the first chapter, for easy reference and to avoid repetition in the separate chapters. In the second chapter an account of the first empirical studies of the theoretically-derived profiles is given, together with some illustrative results. The chapter has been included partly because the studies have been referred to in some of the state and territory chapters, but also because the work constituted an important, though not widely publicised, step in the development of the profiles.

The chapters contributed by the commissioned authors in each state and territory are Chapters 3 to 10. This collection of chapters provides a rich source of historical material relating to a period of substantial curriculum change in Australian education. It also presents a fascinating picture of the interactions of the many players in such a major undertaking. The authors have generally been frank in describing their trials and tribulations. More than three years after the new approaches began to be implemented, and seven years after they began to be developed, policies and strategies at both system and school level are still evolving. This is to be expected in curriculum reform of the magnitude described in the state and territory chapters.

Although education in Australia is mandated as a state matter, and the chapters reflect state issues to some extent, they also reveal many mutual concerns and practices.

The methodology of and main results from the Australia-wide survey of principals and teachers are contained in Chapter 11. There are several results in this chapter which should be of particular interest to policy makers. The results likely to be most useful concern the specifics of resource materials found useful or perceived as still needed, the needs for professional development, and uses and potential of technology to aid implementation. There is also discussion of 'grass roots' perceptions of the benefits and difficulties associated with the profiles approach to learning and teaching.

The fourth section of the report contains several chapters, the first of which describes the methodology and foci of the case study visits to schools. The remaining chapters in this section contain many insights into the ways in which implementation and use of the profiles approach can be successful, though the predominant message is that there is still a long way to go to achieve something even approaching full implementation. Lists and discussion of factors which seem to be essential to successful implementation and factors which are important though probably not essential are presented. These lists are based on the material collected during the interviews and the researchers' observations of the 'climate' in the various schools visited.

To illustrate the key implementation factors identified, the chapters in this section contain extracts from the transcripts of the interviews. Through these quotes the experiences and concerns of the principals and teachers interviewed become vivid. These chapters should be of value to policy makers who have a responsibility to make the implementation a success. They should also be of interest to teacher educators and teachers who wish to glean information about useful teaching, assessment and reporting practices.

The book's title is intended to reflect several aspects of the saga of implementing the large curriculum initiative that the statements and profiles, and their derivatives, represent. The 'statements' describe the learning that educators would like the students to achieve; the 'profiles' are the means by which teachers describe the learning that the students have actually accomplished; and the whole book describes how the systems and schools have been learning about the pluses and minuses of attempting such extensive curriculum change. The ACER research team hopes that people from a variety of educational institutions and organisations may also learn from the accounts they read in the book. Putting the book together was a learning experience for each of us.

J.L.
S. M.
T. F.

March 1997

Section 1:

Introduction

1 Overview of Developments with the National Statements and Profiles to 1993

At various times in the past 30 years there have been attempts in Australia to promote the view that a national curriculum for school education would be preferable for the country and its students, rather than a range of curricula differing according to where one lives. The major curriculum reforms in the USA and the UK in the 1960s, particularly in science and mathematics but also in the social sciences, stimulated ideas for national curriculum projects in Australia. In the 1970s, Australian materials were developed by the national Curriculum Development Corporation (CDC) in science and in social education, but adoption of these materials by the various states was very uneven.[1] In a further attempt at promoting the ideal of a national core curriculum, the CDC published a discussion document, 'Core Curriculum for Australian Schools', in 1980.

This document appeared at a time when there was increasing dissatisfaction about the suitability of Australian education for equipping students for a post-industrial economy, and was seen as not addressing those needs. Australian education had for 20 years or so been motivated by concerns for 'the individual child as a unique, developing human being and (...) for social justice'.[2] The focus was input-oriented, with the belief that student learning would improve through having professionally educated teachers working at a local level to develop the most appropriate curriculum and program for each child. Official curriculum guidelines were general and brief, if they existed at all, and schools and teachers had substantial say in what was taught and what resources were used. Funds and efforts were devoted to reducing class sizes, so that teachers had a better chance to cope with an individual student focus.

In times of economic prosperity, such philosophies can be supported. Backlash against them began towards the end of the 1970s as economic growth slowed down. Concern grew that schools were not concentrating sufficiently on 'the basics' (literacy and numeracy). A paradigm shift from focusing on individual students as learners to an economics-driven concern with achieving pre-specified outcomes occurred in the early 1980s. The view was that outcomes should be specified so that performance could be measured. Industry notions of 'performance levels' and 'benchmarks' entered the educational arena (and are still prevalent today). Teacher numbers began to be reduced, by many thousands in some states, and class sizes rose. The pendulum swung back to support from the general public for greater curriculum control and greater accountability for education.

Collaborating to develop a national school curriculum

By far the most interesting saga was the way in which the federal government, through its education Minister John Dawkins, placed national curriculum reform high on the agenda—from the perspective that 'our education and training systems should play an active role in responding to the major economic challenges now facing Australia'.[3] In a later paper, Dawkins advocated a common framework setting out 'the major areas of knowledge and the most appropriate mix of skills and experience' for students throughout their schooling, and also outlining criteria for 'methods of assessing the achievement of curriculum objectives'.[4]

At the time, most state governments were Labor (Democrat), as was the federal government. Further, in times of reduced budgets for education, collaborating on curriculum reform held some appeal. For the next five years, until mid 1993, there followed an extraordinary amount of collaborative work to reach agreed positions on what constituted the essential 'learning areas' for schools (eight were agreed on: The Arts, English, Health & Physical Education, Languages other than English, Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society & Environment, Technology); on producing agreed 'statements' of the content to be covered at various stages; and on specifying 'profiles' of outcomes against which to assess achievement at various levels. A comprehensive account of the events and key players is contained in Marsh,[5] while an interesting, more reflective perspective is provided by Piper,[6] and a more critical perspective is presented by Clements and Ellerton.[7] The main events are summarised in the following chart.[8]

1986	Australian Education Council (AEC) resolved to 'support the concept of a national collaborative effort in curriculum development in Australia to utilise to maximum effect scarce curriculum resources and to ensure that unnecessary differences in curricula from state to state be minimised'
1988	Commonwealth, states and territories agreed to work on national collaborative curriculum projects
1989	Australian Education Council (AEC) ratified a formal declaration of 10 common and agreed national goals for schooling in Australia ('Hobart Declaration') Out of this agreement the AEC identified eight broad areas of learning and commissioned the writing of statements and profiles in each. These areas consist of The Arts English Health and Physical Education Languages Other Than English (LOTE) Mathematics Science Studies of Society and Environment Technology.

1988 - 1991	Curriculum mapping occurred in the learning areas of mathematics, English literacy, science, technology, social sciences and the environment as a cross curriculum study to identify commonalities across state curricula.
1988 - 1993	Statements were written for the eight key learning areas. The statements were written to define the learning areas of the curriculum identified in the agreed goals for schooling.
1990	Curriculum Corporation established to facilitate national collaborative curriculum development
1990	AEC endorsed the development of profiles for English and mathematics.
1992	Establishment of Curriculum and Assessment Committee (CURASS). The role of this committee was to initiate and supervise national collaborative curriculum development. This committee replaced the Australasian Cooperative Assessment Program (managing profiles) and AEC (managing statements).
1992	CURASS developed national ESL scales and the 'Towards Level 1' section in the profiles.
1991 - 1993	Consultation on the statements occurred at state and national levels. Consultation on, trialing and empirical validation ('calibration') of the profiles and ESL scales occurred at state and national levels.
1992	Work samples were collected from states and territories for inclusion in the profiles.
1993	Statements and profiles were completed in their present form AEC agreed that the publication of statements and profiles should be the responsibility of each state and territory.

Figure 1.1 Key Stages of Recent Curriculum and Assessment Reforms in Australia 1986 to 1993

The attempt was not without its critics, especially regarding the 'blitzkrieg' timetable,[9] and from subject matter specialists (mostly academics) who objected to the lack of opportunities for consultation and worried that rigorous standards would be forgotten. By way of example, the strength of negative opinion about the profiles held by some prominent Australian mathematicians and mathematics educators is expressed throughout Clements' and Ellerton's book.[10] By mid-1993 the 'statements' (curriculum content descriptions) and 'profiles' (expected student learning outcomes) were complete in draft form for most of the eight areas and were submitted to the Australian Education Council (AEC, as the group of state and federal ministers of education and their chief executive officers was then called) for endorsement at its meeting on 2 July.

Curriculum reform initiatives that had already begun in some states prior to and during the early stages of the national collaboration had meanwhile come to a halt, in anticipation of the adoption of the national frameworks. By mid 1993, however, most of the state governments had changed to Liberal and the more conservative view of education as a state matter dominated the group. Instead of endorsing the statements and profiles, the AEC meeting referred them back to the states so that any decision about implementing them, to what extent and in what form, would be a state decision. Thus the vision of a national curriculum for Australian schools was officially terminated, in one afternoon, in a decision that was unexpected in most quarters.

What do the 'statements' and 'profiles' contain?

Each national statement defines an area of learning. Aspects considered by those who developed the documents to be essential are outlined, to provide a 'framework around which systems and schools may build their ... curriculum'.[11] There is usually a chapter on the importance of the area and another on its goals. The major section of each statement lays out the scope of the curriculum, organised into 'strands' (sometimes referred to as 'organisers') which usually correspond to more familiar-sounding topic areas—for example, 'Number', 'Measurement', Space', 'Algebra' and so on in mathematics.

Within each strand the curriculum for the learning area is described in four broad bands, referred to as 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', corresponding to primary and secondary years of schooling. The bands are not intended to correspond precisely to year levels, though the expectation is that Band A corresponds with the lower years of primary school, Band B with the upper primary years, Band C with lower secondary and Band D with upper secondary years. Bands A to C contain the skills and experiences considered necessary for 'the typical citizen'.

Each national profile also contains the same strands as the corresponding learning area statement. Within each strand, eight levels of achievement are described, to reflect the full range of student achievement during the compulsory years of schooling (Years 1 to 10). The profiles were designed to 'assist in the improvement of teaching and learning' and to 'provide a common language for reporting student achievement'.[12]

The 'levels' are defined within the strands with a 'level statement', which is a general description of student performance considered to characterise the level. Then follows a series of 'outcomes', or 'outcome statements', one or more per strand per level, intended to convey the kinds of skills the student who is considered to be functioning at that level will have. An example from Level 1 of the Number strand within mathematics is 'Counts and estimates collections, orders two or more collections, and orders things within collections.' Further illustration of skills that can be considered to indicate whether a student is functioning at that level is then presented, in a series of task descriptions referred to as 'pointers'. An example from the same mathematics strand is 'Use numbers to decide which collection is bigger, smaller, same size ("If he's got 7 mice at home and I only have 5, then he has more")'. From the range of pointers listed, and also from other similar tasks, the notion is that teachers will be able to assess students' performance 'against the profiles'.

A key difference in the statements and profiles from earlier curriculum guidelines is their focus on student learning outcomes, rather than on lesson sequencing or on other pedagogical strategies. References to pedagogy were deliberately avoided, as it was considered that teaching methods and strategies are the responsibility of the states. The outcomes-based approach which characterises the national profiles was intended to reduce unnecessary differences and overlaps between the states, with a view to achieving greater cohesion through the collaborative work that would be needed to implement the approach.

From mid 1993

Following the AEC meeting in the middle of 1993, the state curriculum authorities did each consider the national documents, and predictably decided on a range of courses of action over a variety of timelines. It is those courses and timetables which are described in Chapters 3 to 10 in the next section of the book.

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[1] C. J. Marsh, *Producing a National Curriculum: Plans and Paranoia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1994.

[2] C. Collins (Ed.), *Curriculum Stocktake*, Australian College of Education, Canberra, 1995.

[3] J. Dawkins & A. C. Holding, *Skills for Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1987, p. iii.

[4] J. Dawkins, *Strengthening Australia's Schools*, Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Canberra, 1988, pp 7-8.

[5] C. J. Marsh, 1994.

[6] K, Piper, *Riders in the Chariot: Curriculum Reform and the National Interest 1965-1995*, Australian Education Review No. 38, Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne, 1997.

[7] M. A. (Ken) Clements & N. F. Ellerton, *The National Curriculum Debacle*, Meridian Press, Perth, 1994.

[8] Most of this chart was prepared by Margaret Willis, of the Outcomes and Reporting Section of the Australian Capital Territory Department of Education and Training.

[9] K. Forster, Plus ça change ... The national curriculum framework in New South Wales, in C. Collins (Ed.), pp 205-213.

[10] M. A. (Ken) Clements & N. F. Ellerton, 1994.

[11] Australian Education Council, *A National Statement on Mathematics for Australian Schools*, Author, Melbourne, 1990, p. i.

[12] Curriculum Corporation, *Mathematics – A Curriculum Profile for Australian Schools*, Author, Melbourne, 1994, p. iii.

2 Summary of the 1992-93 ACER Calibration Studies

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Australian curriculum statements and profiles were developed by teams of experts, using their subject matter knowledge and their accumulated wisdom about what, when and how children learn in any given area of school study. This is often termed a 'top-down' approach, as it is informed by theoretical conceptions of what a learning area consists of together with experienced people's knowledge and ideas, built up over time, of how students acquire increasing competence, rather than being derived from a set of data collected to see what results.

We have also seen that the profiles were developed as a set of national frameworks for reporting, designed to assist teachers to make professional judgements about their students' learning and to report these assessments in a consistent way. To be useful for these purposes, it is essential that the profiles be written in language that is meaningful to classroom teachers and that they describe student learning outcomes that make sense in the classroom context. As the work of developing the profiles progressed, it was therefore important to step back a little from the process and ask not only whether teachers in general could understand the structure and detail of the profiles sufficiently to apply them in their classrooms, but also whether the sequence and nature of learning described in each profile were in accord with students' typical learning patterns. Without these conditions being met, teachers would have difficulty in using a profile and its value as an assessment and reporting framework would be diminished because the meaning to attach to a judgement would not be clear.

From early in 1992, beginning with the draft mathematics profile, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was commissioned to undertake a series of nation-wide empirical validation studies involving the use of the draft profiles in schools. The specification of 'validation' studies at that stage was probably misleading, as the aim of the studies was to *calibrate* the profile outcome statements along the implied underlying learning continua in the various areas and then compare the empirical ordering with the levels defined in the draft profiles. The calibrations were to be used to verify that the 'typical learning sequences' expressed by adult experts in the profile drafts provided a reasonable match to what was actually observed in typical classrooms. The studies were in no way intended to establish or offer commentary on the validity of the statements and profiles as appropriate goals for school learning.

Over a period of about eighteen months, empirical studies were carried out by ACER in schools to calibrate first the draft mathematics profile, followed by the profiles in English, technology, science, the arts, studies of society and environment, health and physical education, languages other than English, and the

English as a Second Language Scales. A second calibration was also carried out for mathematics, after some sections of the draft profile were revised on the basis of input from the first study.'

Issues explored in the studies

The following five issues were the focus of the calibration studies:

- Do the eight levels of each profile represent progressively higher levels of competence?
- Do the outcomes that are grouped together at a level within a strand represent approximately equivalent levels of competence?
- Within a profile, is there consistency between strands in the definition of levels?
- At what level(s) of competence are students in various year levels typically working?
- Do teachers feel that they are able to understand the various aspects and levels of competence as these are expressed in the outcome statements?

Methodology

Design

A similar design was used in each study. The design for mathematics is described here by way of illustration. For other learning areas the numbers of respondents differed a little and in some cases the year levels assessed were different. For example, whereas Years 1, 4, 7, 10 and 12 were used for mathematics, Years 1, 3, 6, 9 and 11 were chosen for English and Years 2, 4, 7, 10 and 12 were chosen for technology.

Schools from all states and territories were involved in each of the studies. In each case the teachers who took part were selected or nominated by the research project team or by state system contacts; they were not sampled in the strict sense. The purpose of this exercise, early in the evolution of the statements and profiles, was to obtain empirical data from a cross-section of practising teachers. As it was preferable to involve teachers who had some awareness of what the profiles entailed, it was not possible to use a sampling procedure that selected teachers entirely at random. It was important for judgements to be obtained from 150 or so teachers per learning area, and for a sizeable number of students. The designed number of teachers for the mathematics calibration study is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Designed Teacher Sample by State and Year Level

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	ACT	NT
Year 12	8	10	7	7	6	3	3	3
Year 10	3	4	3	2	2	1	2	1
Year 7	4	4	3	3	2	1	1	2
Year 4	4	4	2	2	2	1	1	1
Year 1	9	12	7	5	6	5	3	3
Total	28	34	22	19	18	11	10	10

All main strands from each learning area profile were included in the calibrations. Each teacher assessed some of his or her own students with respect to outcome statements in one of the learning areas. To lessen the load on teachers and to avoid requiring them to assess students in terms of inappropriate profile levels, the design shown in Table 2.2 was developed. A tick in the table corresponding to a year and profile level shows the range of levels at which teachers of students in each given year level were asked to assess their students. The design allowed all of the outcomes in a learning area, across the span of year levels, to be calibrated onto a common scale.

Table 2.2 Profile Levels Assessed by Teachers at Each Year Level

	Profile levels							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Year 12					✓	✓	✓	✓
Year 10				✓	✓	✓	✓	
Year 7			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Year 4		✓	✓	✓				
Year 1	✓	✓						

As a further step to lessen the load on teachers, each teacher was asked to assess students on only two of the profile strands. Where possible, the assignment of teachers to strands was done randomly, though in some instances teachers specified a preference for particular strands. Because of the extent of the task, teachers were asked to assess only ten students each—the first five girls and the first five boys on their class list for the selected class. An example of how the allocation to strands distributed the teachers in the designed sample is presented, again for mathematics, in Table 2.3. (Note that the algebra strand of the profile has outcomes from levels five to eight only.)

Table 2.3 Designed Number of Teachers per Mathematics Strand and Profile Level

Profile level	Algebra	Chance & Data	Measurement	Number	Space	Working mathematically
8	25	24	25	31	23	23
7	35	32	34	31	32	31
6	45	42	43	41	42	42
5	45	42	43	41	42	42
4		29	29	30	29	28
3		21	20	20	20	20
2		40	42	41	41	37
1		29	31	31	31	28

Given that each teacher was intended to assess 10 students, the designed number of students can be obtained by multiplying the number of teachers in Table 2.3 by ten.

Administration procedures

The same administration procedures were used in each of the calibration studies. All the information a teacher needed for participation in the study was presented to the teacher on either a Macintosh or a DOS diskette. To collect data, ACER produced a computer program that presented the outcome statements, from the strands assigned to each teacher, in random order. Teachers were asked to consider the skills and achievements of the 10 selected students from their class and make an assessment of each student with respect to the outcome displayed. Four response categories were provided for this purpose:

1) the named student *hardly ever* demonstrates this competence
2) the named student *sometimes* demonstrates this competence
3) the named student *almost always* demonstrates this competence
4) unable to make a judgement.

The last category had two sub-categories: a) I have not yet had an opportunity to gather assessment information relating to this outcome; and b) I don't understand the wording of this outcome.

Apart from being a convenient way in which to collect data, the computer administration had the key advantage of easily being able to randomise the order of the outcomes so that the teachers responding, at that early point in the development of the profiles, had no information about the level (within their own set) at which the outcome was designated. The program was able to present both the outcome statements and their elaborations, if requested, thereby assisting teachers to interpret the outcome statements.

Analyses

The data were analysed with the computer program Quest,[2] which uses Item Response Modelling techniques to produce calibrations of the outcome statements along the learning continuum they were intended to describe. These empirically derived levels were then compared with their defined levels in the profiles with respect to the 'issues for exploration' identified above.

The ordering of the outcomes from a calibration exercise of this type represents teacher perceptions of the frequency with which their students attain the outcomes. An outcome will be calibrated as 'easier' than another outcome if teachers judge that more students have attained the skills expressed in the first outcome than in the second. The magnitude of the difference between the calibrations of the two outcomes represents the extent to which one is easier than the other. It is convenient to think of the calibration of an outcome from such an exercise as its 'difficulty'.

Examples of results

In the following, after reference to the response rates obtained from teachers, some examples of results pertaining to each of the main questions listed earlier are illustrated and discussed. The examples are presented in the order which best allows a picture to be built up of the way the profiles were found to function in practice.

Response rates

Teacher response rates were good to excellent, varying from 75 per cent to 95 per cent per learning area, with several in the vicinity of 90 per cent. Most teachers were able to provide assessments for 10 students, as requested. This meant that judgements were available for 200 or more students per level per strand, and often for 500 or more.

Meaning of outcomes

To be confident that the teachers' assessments of their students in relation to attainment of the profile outcomes would be meaningful, it was important to know how well the teachers felt they could understand what was meant by the outcome statements themselves. The ACER studies' results were encouraging in this regard. Across all learning areas, very few teachers said that they were not able to understand the meaning of an outcome. (It needs to be remembered here that teachers could refer to the 'pointers' for clarification if they wished, just as they could if they were working from the printed documents in a usual classroom setting.) It was more common, though also not extensive, for teachers to respond that they had not yet had an opportunity to gather assessment information in relation to the outcomes in question. This occurred in all learning areas, mostly at Levels 7 and 8.

Consistency of outcomes within levels

If the outcomes within a level were behaving consistently, their calibrated 'difficulties' would be similar and would be clearly separated from the outcomes at the levels above and below their specified level. This ideal situation is illustrated in Figure 2.1. The vertical axis (arrowed) represents increasing competence for the strand, on an interval scale. On this and the sample charts which follow, each outcome is shown at the height that represents its calibrated 'difficulty', where 'difficulty' is related to the percentage of students achieving the rating 'almost always' on the outcome. The outcomes have been spread out horizontally and clustered by their intended levels for ease of interpretation.

Examples from the ACER studies are presented in Figure 2.2, for the Chance and Data strand of the mathematics profile, and in Figure 2.3, for the Writing strand of the English profile. These charts give pictures of outcomes that students typically find easier and harder, as judged by their teachers. For two reasons, some deviation from the ideal, as can be seen in the charts, was expected in reality. Firstly, the learning hierarchies underlying the profile levels, though the levels were based on the knowledge and prior experience of the committee members responsible for their development, had not yet been examined empirically in this particular form. Secondly, there is always noticeable measurement error associated with assessments based on judgement, even when raters are experienced with the process and using familiar criteria. In this case, teachers were making their judgements on the basis of criteria with which they had limited prior familiarity. There is now ample evidence from published studies that it is best to think of strands as continua of developing competence rather than as discrete levels, and that overlap from each level to the next will probably always be found.[3 4]

While a general impression of increasing competence is revealed in these charts, there is obviously substantial variation in the calibrated difficulties of outcomes within their intended levels. The extent of overlap between adjacent levels can also be seen. Sometimes, from these early data, there were indications that the levels may have been overlapping too much, to the point where teachers would not be able to make meaningful judgements of students' performance by 'level'. Examples from these charts are the overlap between the outcomes notionally at Levels 3 and 4 in Chance and Data, and the lack of separation of Levels 5 and 6, and Levels 7 and 8, in Writing.

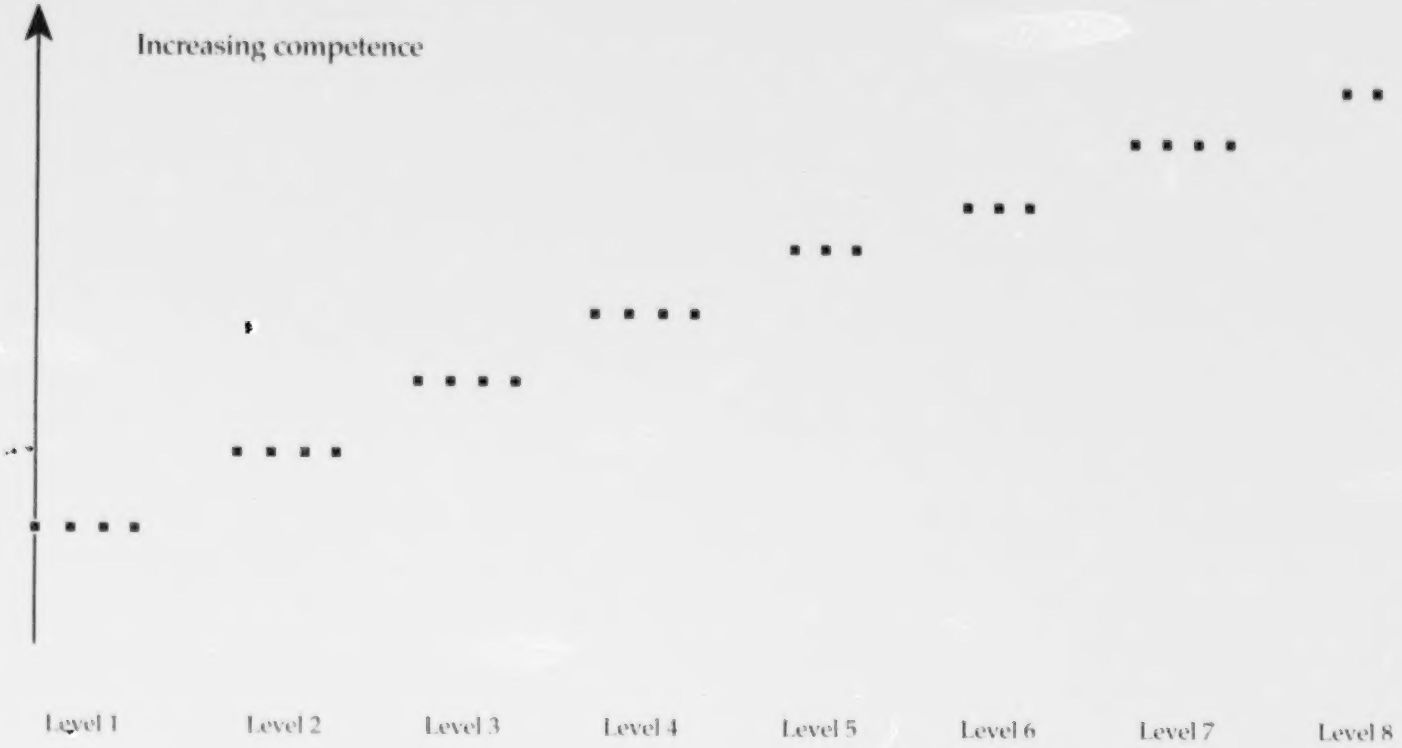

Figure 2.1 Ideal Calibration

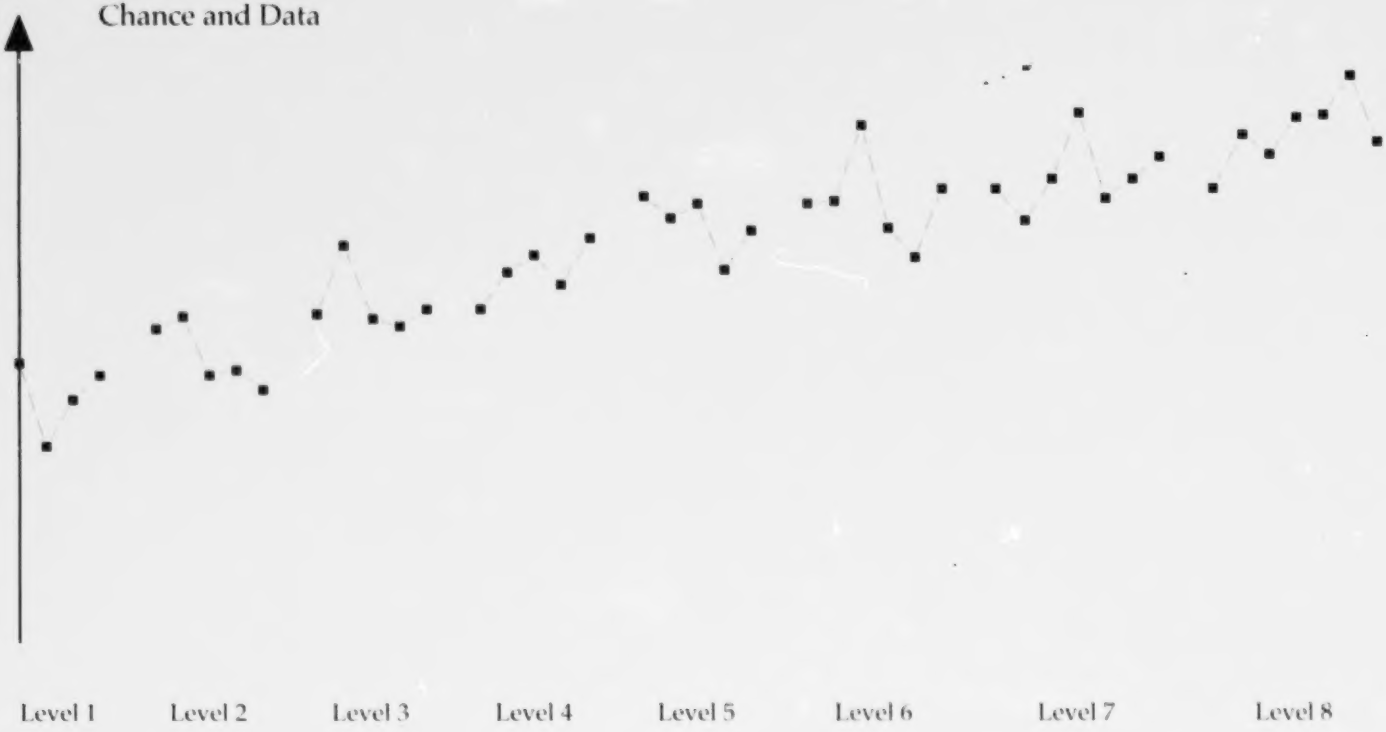

Figure 2.2 Calibrated Outcomes for Chance and Data

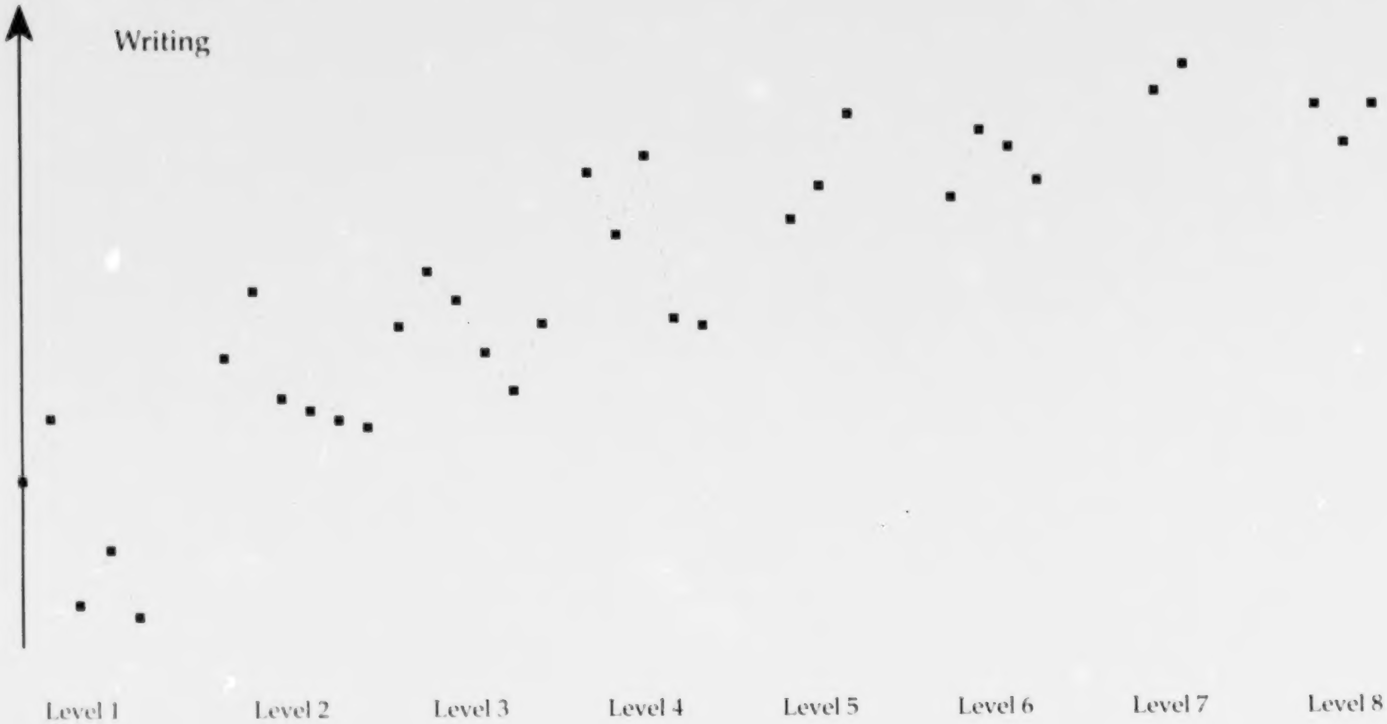

Figure 2.3 Calibrated Outcomes for Writing

The ACER studies in which results such as these were reported for all learning areas were undertaken to provide a preliminary guide to potential anomalies in the placement of outcomes in the various profiles and levels. At the time, the intention was to inform the development of the profiles by providing indications of two important factors: how teachers were interpreting the outcome statements and how the ranges of skills described in these were judged to be manifested in the performances of students at various year levels. The studies were not intended to define the profiles, nor to be used as the basis for inferences about the achievement of the overall Australian student population. They were constructed to assess whether the learning hierarchies underlying the profiles are likely to reflect the progression of student achievement in each area, and to suggest outcomes that might need to be revised either in wording or in placement.

The reports therefore contain detailed appendixes in which all the outcomes presented to teachers were listed. Outcomes considered to be likely anomalies, on the basis of the empirical results, were highlighted in the lists. 'Item maps', such as the one for Chance and Data shown in Figure 2.4, were produced for each strand in each learning area, with the outcomes identified by number. From these maps both the overlap of levels and the outcomes likely to be anomalous in their placement could readily be seen (for example, outcome 3.21 in Chance and Data, which appears to be more similar to Level 4 than to Level 3 skills, and which was judged more difficult than the related outcome 4.21).

An alternative way of looking at the results obtained from the teacher judgements is shown in Figure 2.5. The Writing data are featured in this figure so that comparisons with Figure 2.3 can be made. Figure 2.5 shows the teacher judgements averaged for students in each year level on each of the outcomes presented to the teachers according to the type of design shown earlier in Table 2.2. For example, in Writing, the Year 1 students were judged to have achieved the Level 1 outcomes on average about halfway between 'sometimes' and 'almost always', while the Year 3 students were judged on average to have achieved them 'almost always'. The analogous results for the Level 2 outcomes were on average 'sometimes' for the Year 1 students and about halfway between 'sometimes' and 'almost always' for the Year 3 students.

In this figure it is useful to look both across the outcomes by profile level for students at each year level and to look up and down the columns of outcomes for each profile level. If the profile levels are well separated, the bars for the clusters of outcomes should slope down from the left to the right of the chart. This appears to hold for the lower profile levels and the primary level students, but is less apparent for the older students and the higher profile levels, consistent with the results in Figure 2.3. Although the results for the Level 1–2 and Level 7–8 pairs were obtained from students in only one year level, the design allowed for this by including greater numbers of teachers at these levels.

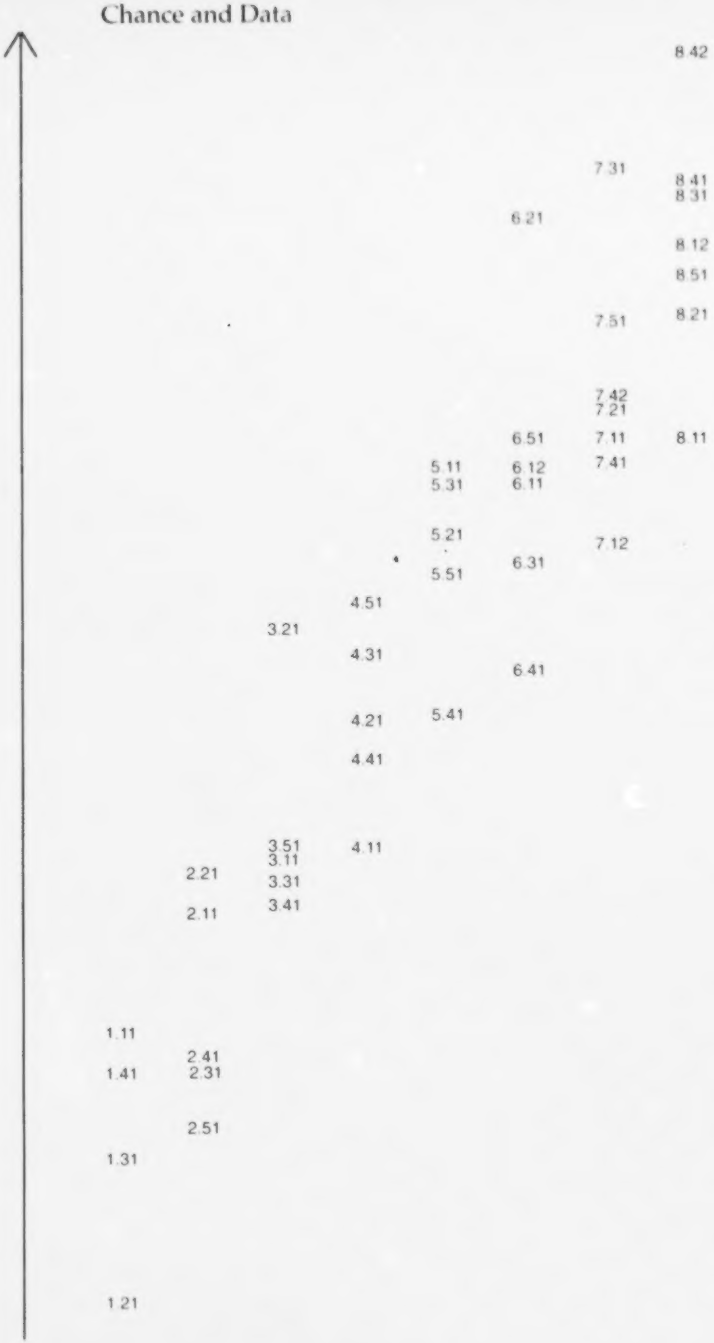

Figure 2.4 'Item Map' of Calibrated Outcomes for Chance and Data

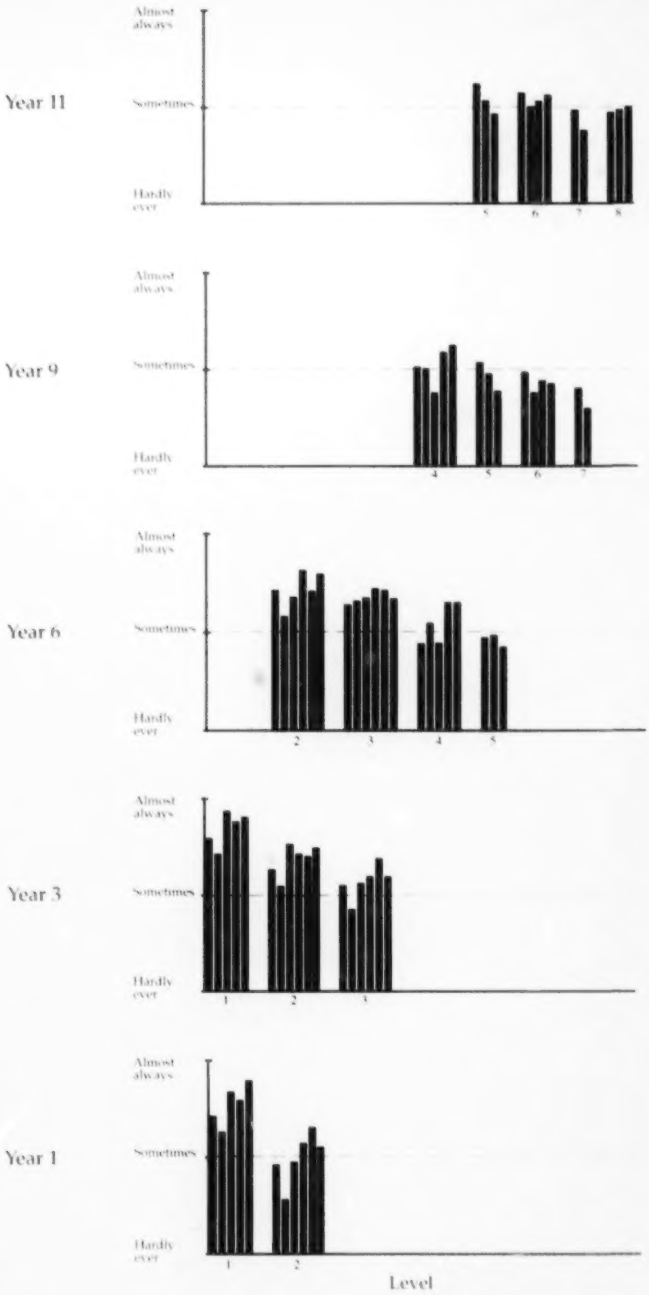

Figure 2.5 Average of Teachers' Judgements of Students for Writing

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Progression of profile levels

Some indication of the progression of profile levels can be obtained from Figure 2.5 in the previous section. For a given profile level, the average of judgements made for students at a higher year level should be higher than the judgements made for students at a lower year level. For Writing, an anomaly where the Year 6 students were judged to achieve more highly than the Year 9 students on the Level 4 outcomes is indicated in the figure.

Another perspective on the progression of levels is presented in Figure 2.6, which relates the average judgements of the students' achievements to the level calibrations of the outcomes in three of the strands from studies of society and environment (SOSE). Analogous charts were produced for all strands in all eight learning areas.

In Figure 2.6 the average teacher-judged performance of students at each of the six year levels included in the study are shown in relation to the eight profile levels. For each level within a strand there are two points plotted, joined by a dotted line. The lower point is plotted at the location on the strand continuum at which the most likely judgement of the students changes from 'hardly ever' to 'sometimes'. The upper point is shown at the location where the most likely judgement of the students changes from 'sometimes' to 'almost always'. Thus the two points and the connecting line define three regions: the 'almost always' region (above the upper point); the 'sometimes' region (between the two points); and the 'hardly ever' region (below the lower point).

For these three SOSE strands, the progression of levels is best for the 'Systems' strand, with the exception of Level 8. For 'Cultures and beliefs' there is a general progression of the upper points but there appear to be anomalies in some of the lower points. For 'Resources' the picture is rather mixed. Level 4 is not separated from Level 3 and there is considerable overlap in Levels 5 to 8. The results for other learning areas were similar overall to the results shown here for SOSE—some strands showed good progression from level to level, almost all showed substantial overlap even when the progression was good, and many showed less differentiation at the higher profile levels than at the lower.

Student performance levels

The calibration studies were not intended to give accurate answers to questions about the profile levels at which students in given year levels would be working—the samples were too small and not appropriately selected for such inferences to be justified. Very approximate indications could be obtained from the average judgements of student achievement by year level, such as are shown by the small arrows to the left of the large vertical arrow for each strand in Figure 2.6. Looking at the 'Systems' strand, the Year 2 and Year 4 students were 'almost always' achieving the levels described by the Levels 1 and 2 outcomes and 'sometimes' achieving those for Levels 3 and 4. The Year 6 and Year 8 students were 'almost always' achieving the Levels 1 and 2 outcomes, approaching 'almost always'

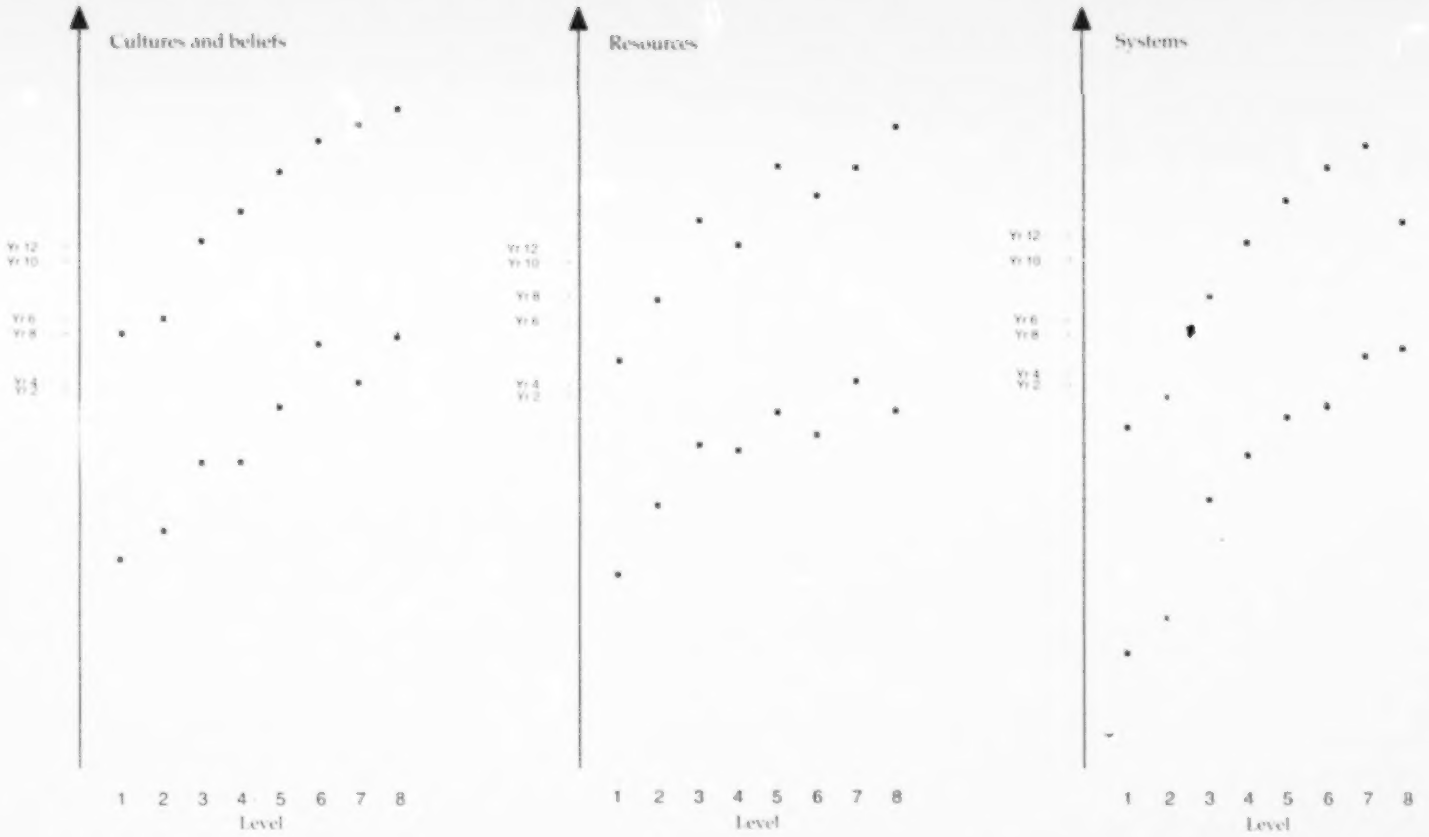

Figure 2.6 Comparison of Average Teacher Judgements of Students and Level Calibrations for Studies of Society and Environment

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achieving the Level 3 outcomes and 'sometimes' achieving the Levels 4, 5 and 6 outcomes.

For the SOSE strands illustrated here, there was little separation between Years 2 and 4, between Years 6 and 8 and between Years 10 and 12. The largest 'growth' is indicated between the Year 6/8 average judgements and the Year 10/12 average judgements of achievement. This pattern was not uniform either within or across learning areas, suggesting that in these early days of use of the profile outcome statements there had not been time for common understandings of 'levelness' to develop. It is also possible that clearer results would have been obtained from larger, more representatively selected samples.

Consistency of levels across strands

The remaining question examined in the calibration studies was the extent to which the strands of a learning area were being consistently interpreted within the profile levels. If there is consistency of outcomes across the strands, within each profile level we would expect to find the average judgements of student achievement for the various strands clustered together. If the profile levels are well separated, the clusters of averages would show as well separated. The average outcome calibrations for the English profile categories of 'Speaking and listening', 'Reading and viewing', and 'Writing' are shown in Figure 2.7. In general, this figure indicates the between category consistency to be quite good, certainly from Levels 1 to 5. The Level 6 and Level 8 categories are highly consistent within level, but problems are indicated in the separation of Levels 5 and 6 and in placement of the Level 7 categories. At Level 7, the average for 'Speaking and listening' was considerably easier for the students to attain than the average for the other two categories. Also, the Level 8 outcomes for the other two categories were easier for the students to achieve than the Level 7 outcomes.

It needs to be stressed again that this series of calibration studies was intended to be exploratory, with the primary purpose of informing the development of the profiles while there was opportunity for possible anomalies to be reviewed and revisions to be made as the development progressed. Now that the profile outcome statements are more familiar to many more teachers, and much experience has been gained in assigning 'levels' to students in several states, similar kinds of calibration studies would probably yield clearer results. The studies described in this chapter played a useful role in the evolution of the national profiles. It would be interesting to carry out further such investigations with the state and territory variations, building on the greater experience base that now exists among teachers across Australia.

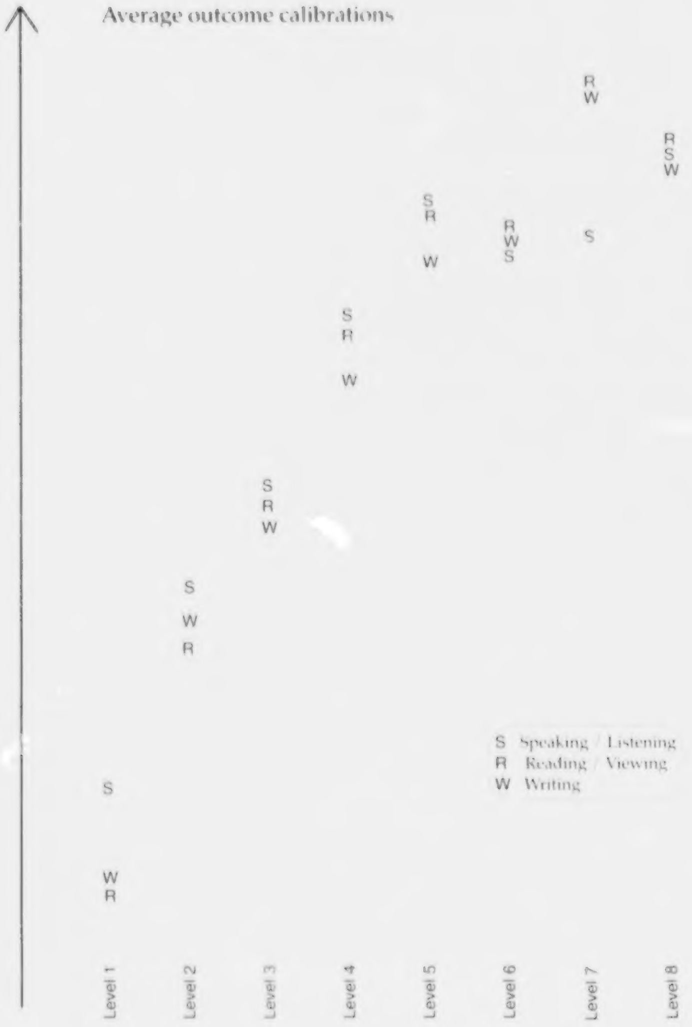

Figure 2.7 Consistency of Average Outcome Calibrations for English

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[1] A series of limited circulation reports was prepared to present and discuss the results of the calibration studies, authored by combinations of R. Adams, J. Barley, A Harvey-Beavis & M. Wu. Those reports have been drawn on in this chapter.

[2] R. Adams & S.-T. Khoo, *Quest: The Interactive Test Analysis System*, ACER, Melbourne, 1992.

[3] G. Masters & M. Forster, *Progress Maps (Assessment Resource Kit)*, ACER, Melbourne, 1996.

[4] P.Titmanis, F. Murphy, J. Cook, K. Brady & M. Brown, *Profiles of Student Achievement: English and Mathematics in Western Australian Government Schools*, 1992, Ministry of Education, Perth, 1993.

Section 2:

State and Territory Initiatives

3 The National Agenda in the National Capital

Margaret Willis

School-based curriculum development in the ACT

Nineteen seventy four marked a new beginning for schools in the Australian Capital Territory. No longer was the New South Wales Department of Education to supply teachers, curricula, inspection services and examinations to ACT schools. The ACT was to work directly to the federal Minister for Education through the newly established Interim ACT Schools Authority.

The ACT community push for autonomy from NSW was based on the perception that the NSW Department of Education was large, highly centralised and removed from the needs of the ACT community. ACT parents and teachers were asking for a participatory, democratic education system. They wanted to take part in policy development and the governance of their schools. In this early period a major decision was made by the Interim Authority that would drive the development of curricula in the ACT from then to the present time. A school-based model of curriculum development would be adopted for the future education of students from K-12.

The case for this decision is best reported in the words of the ACT Schools Authority:

> ... each school will be expected to determine its own educational philosophy, emphasis and programs based on the individual needs of its own students through a flexible and approachable administration ... the Authority will provide guidance, resources and skills to help school boards and teachers in devising and implementing their education programs.[1]

The expectation that each school, in conjunction with its school board, would determine its own philosophy, emphasis and curriculum resulted in two principles becoming enshrined in the ACT system: school-based curriculum development (or as it has become interpreted in practice, school-based decision making) and curriculum autonomy.

Implementation of the new direction varied from school to school and even from learning area to learning area, reflecting the independence of schools and school boards in curriculum decision making. Numerous schools accepted the challenge and opportunity to develop curriculum that reflected the needs of the school community. Other 'school-based' documents reflected the interests of the teachers developing the documents, yet others closely reflected the source documents of the states and territories.

Nineteen eighty nine was to be a further milestone for the ACT community. The federal Government handed over the responsibility of government to the people of the territory. With self-government, 'Education' was to become a Ministerial portfolio and the Schools Authority became known as the Department of Education. Despite this change and the new accessibility of all Members of the House of Assembly to the ACT community, the principles of school-based curriculum remained thoroughly embedded in the philosophy of the ACT system.

As the ACT Education system matured, accountability in school-based curriculum developed. Initially there was a 'Program Review', later followed by a five-year cycle of whole school review, 'School Performance Review and Development'. This included review of the school-based curriculum by central office staff. The main impact of this curriculum review was to remind schools of their obligation to complete documentation of their curriculum. In 1993 the school-based documents were reviewed in the light of the work that had commenced on the national curriculum statements and the national profiles. This was the first clear indication that ACT school communities were to be active participants in the rapidly emerging 'national agenda' and this agenda had the capacity to change the way teachers went about their work.

In 1984 development of ACT secondary school Curriculum Frameworks commenced. In general, ACT Curriculum Frameworks were to provide:

> structure, without rigidity; organisation, without prescription; development, without lock sequencing; practicality, without trivialisation. Provide a map of the territory but not an itinerary for the journey.[2]

The first framework developed was for Years 7-10 Home Economics. Development closely followed Havelock's Problem-Solver Model: 'Problem solving is usually seen as a patterned sequence of activities beginning with a need which is sensed and articulated by the client.'[3] The Mathematics framework document followed the same approach to modify the overcrowded and outdated secondary mathematics curriculum that was being used in the majority of ACT high schools.[4] A similar process was used by the curriculum consultants in the development of other key learning area frameworks.

Until 1989 the actual design of each framework document varied. In 1990 a decision was made to rewrite all frameworks in the same format and style, and in mid 1990 a Cross Curriculum Perspectives Statement was added to all frameworks.

The ACT contribution to the development of national statements and profiles

ACT teachers were involved in the project to develop national statements and profiles from the inception of the national work. The ACT had the responsibility for co-leading, with South Australia, the mapping of the English key learning area (KLA) and writing the English statement and profile. Teachers from across Australia participated in this mapping and writing exercise.

Classroom teachers also participated in an evaluative exercise once the profiles were in final draft form. A number of teachers attempted to map a small group of students against draft profiles outcomes in 1994 and 1995 (an earlier, similar evaluation to which ACT teachers contributed is described in Chapter 2). Feedback about appropriateness of outcome descriptors and sequencing of the outcomes was collected for management groups. This was a major exercise to validate the documents as a national approach to teaching and learning and to curriculum development.

Further significant contribution to the statements and profiles was achieved from ACT representation on the national Curriculum and Assessment Committee (CURASS) during the development process. A wide range of representatives was invited to the consultation sessions as various drafts of the statements and profiles were written. For many teachers, senior staff and members from the tertiary sector, this was unknown territory.

Customising the national statements to the ACT curriculum frameworks

From the outset of the national collaborative exercise, it was the intention of the ACT to incorporate the national statements into the ACT curriculum frameworks as their scope and sequence components. However, because around 90 per cent of ACT children attend government preschools and because preschool curriculum had been developed in conjunction with the draft curriculum frameworks, a significant change that occurred during the incorporation process was the development of an additional band of learning outcomes to accommodate this difference in the organisation of ACT schools. The band was called the Early Years of Schooling (preschool to Year 1).

Another significant change was the re-writing and expansion of the national statement goals into the 'Broad outcomes' in the ACT curriculum frameworks. Inevitably, as the statements were incorporated into the curriculum frameworks, some minor additional changes were made to the scope and sequence in each of the key learning areas (KLAs) to give the documents more of an ACT flavour. This work was completed in 1993.

The strongest customising element in the curriculum frameworks was the addition of 'Across curriculum perspectives', included to reflect the emphasis upon access, equity and social justice in ACT Department policies. The across curriculum perspectives are intended to cover the significant educational and societal issues that cut across all curriculum boundaries. Nine across curriculum perspectives, and strategies to embed them in teaching and learning programs specific to each key learning area, are described in the opening section of each framework.

Consultation process

Since its inception in 1974, one of the cornerstones of the ACT school system has been school-based curriculum development and assessment. Community involvement has been significant and ongoing in all stages of curriculum development. The draft ACT curriculum frameworks were written by groups of classroom practitioners in consultation with relevant stakeholders such as parent organisations, academics, community groups, teacher unions and professional associations. In addition, ACT personnel were heavily involved in the development of the national documents themselves and ACT stakeholders were kept informed of developments.

For these reasons, and given that the role of the emerging statements had been agreed upon in advance, the writing process was undertaken and completed within a few months of the appearance of the statements.

Writing process and publication

The CURASS initiatives supported the development of the ACT Curriculum Frameworks, and the addition of the 'Scope' from the national statements added to their credibility and usefulness for ACT teachers. Writing the ACT frameworks was completed in the six months following the publication of national statements in June 1993. The Frameworks were realigned into strands, and scope and sequence were added. Where possible, teachers who had participated in the draft development contributed to the final frameworks. Teachers involved in the writing and reference groups are acknowledged at the back of each framework. This localisation of the authorship enhanced their credibility with teachers throughout the territory's schools.

In June 1994 the ACT Curriculum Frameworks were published as companion documents to the national profiles and were launched by the ACT Minister for Education and Training. The cover, colour and presentation of each ACT framework was similar to those of the national profiles after negotiation with the latter's publisher, the Curriculum Corporation. This link was to encourage teachers to think of the ACT frameworks and the national profiles as documents to be used together in planning the learning and teaching process. This approach was also intended to counter the tendency to think in terms of teaching to outcomes from the profiles.

Implementation in schools

The draft curriculum frameworks written in the early 1990s reflected the emerging national move towards outcomes-based education and these frameworks were used by schools undertaking their curriculum review in that period.

The ACT Minister of Education, Mr Bill Wood, announced in 1993 that ACT government schools would implement the nationally developed profiles after a two year trial in 1994-95. In launching the curriculum frameworks on the 24 May 1994, he asserted that:

> ... Through the use of the ACT curriculum frameworks and nationally developed profiles, the ACT is at the forefront of a national trend towards an outcomes based approach to education.[5]

All ACT schools were subsequently issued with the ACT curriculum frameworks, on the basis of one set per teacher in primary schools and one copy of the relevant KLA frameworks per teacher in high schools. A new stage in ACT school-based curriculum development had been achieved. For the first time, a consistent, centrally developed core document was issued to all schools. Since then, schools in both sectors have used the frameworks as the basis for review and revision in their curriculum development plans.

Critical to successful implementation of the frameworks has been extensive central office and school level inservicing on the use of the frameworks. In addition, all teachers in the ACT were released for a half-day inservice on both profiles and frameworks in 1994 and/or 1995. Following the distribution of the documents in a number of the KLAs, specific professional development needs were identified. Inservice programs have targeted these areas over the past two years. The Department used a common strategy during the professional development courses run centrally and in schools. This strategy clearly defined the purpose of the ACT Curriculum Frameworks and their relationship with the national profiles. Their use was introduced in the context of the ACT move towards outcomes-based education.

The relationship between the frameworks and profiles as defined in the ACT, which is expanded on in later paragraphs, can be briefly stated as:

- *Frameworks* outline what might be taught to achieve learning outcomes. *Profiles* show the typical progression in achieving these outcomes;
- ACT Curriculum Frameworks and the profiles are consistent with nationally developed curriculum statements for Australian schools.

The following distinctions were made between the frameworks and the profiles:

- *Curriculum Frameworks* are system level documents which set out the parameters within which ACT schools make decisions about curriculum;
- they provide guidance to schools on the types of learning experiences appropriate to achieving the outcomes outlined in the profile for each KLA and those valued by the ACT Schools System;
- Frameworks include an overview of curriculum content; information on selecting content; a discussion of learning and teaching practice; and guidelines on assessment, reporting and evaluation;
- Profiles describe the progression of learning typically achieved by students during the compulsory years of schooling in each of the eight KLAs (The Arts; English Language; Health & Physical Education; Languages other than English; Mathematics; Science; Studies of Society and Environment and Technology);
- they provide a structure for identifying what students know and can do:
    - they include a range of strategies and examples to assist teachers to make decisions about when students reach particular outcomes;
- Profiles provide a common basis for reporting student progress and assist teachers to chart student achievement against specific learning outcomes:
    - they do not proscribe particular forms of assessment.

HUB document

The concept of the ACT Frameworks as the hub for the generation of school-based documents, was an important part of the curriculum review and renewal strategy, as illustrated in Figure 3.1. It was a comprehensive concept, first developed in late 1993, that built on work that is now substantially complete in most schools. It provided a whole school focus for the adoption or the adaptation of frameworks to meet the needs of the individual school and a reminder of the interrelationship of the curriculum as it is being implemented in schools. However the HUB was broader than KLA curriculum documentation.

The whole school HUB document outlines the following features of the school, either in a single document or in a portfolio of documents:

- school vision statement;
- school policies impacting on curriculum;
- school strategic plan;
- description of the nature of the student population;
- identified needs of particular student groups;
- additional broad generic outcomes unique to the school;
- identification of teaching and learning strategies valued by the school, for example an integrated program, cooperative learning;

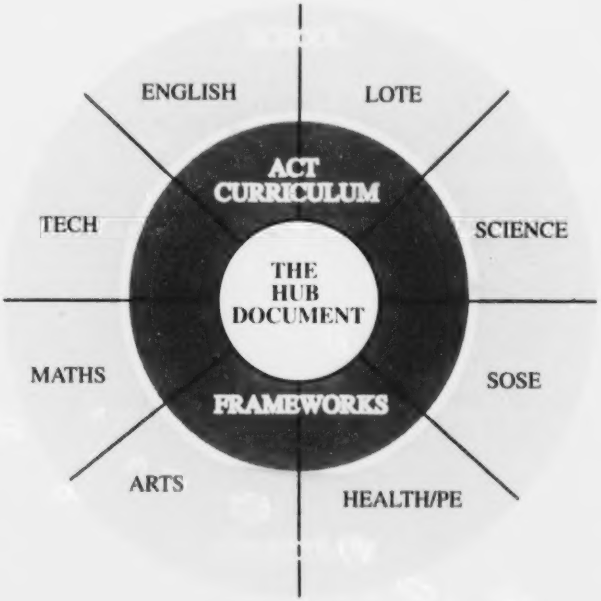

Figure 3.1 Schematic Representation of ACT 'Hub' Document

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- curriculum organisation and implementation within the school;
  - description of process of curriculum development;
  - description of the curriculum delivery organisation and structures;
- mapping how and where the Across Curriculum Perspectives are to be addressed;
- description of generic assessment and reporting strategies;
- description of generic evaluation strategies;
- description of the monitoring processes to ensure all students can access outcomes which are equally balanced across all learning areas; and
- description of how the school curriculum articulates with other education stages (for example, preschool, primary, secondary, college).

To support schools in the use of the curriculum frameworks, guidelines were issued. The following extract, which is written for classroom teachers, comes from some documents ('Key Learning Area Implementation Documents') given to teachers during professional development programs focused on implementing the ACT frameworks:

> The ACT Curriculum Framework forms the basis of your curriculum in each KLA. If your school is renewing curriculum as part of your development plan you will need to localise and enhance the Framework to demonstrate how the KLA is being implemented within your school.
>
> This can be done in one of two ways:
>
> **add in** to the framework using the computer disk copy; or
>
> **add on** to the framework through the development of a separate document.
>
> Whichever approach you take, the document will need to:
>
> - demonstrate how the ACT curriculum framework is being implemented in classroom programs throughout the bands of schooling; and
> - identify and record how the curriculum is taught at your school.
>
> Where the school has adopted an integrated approach to the documentation and the teaching of the curriculum it will need to show how the broad outcomes for each KLA are being achieved.
>
> Adopting the framework as a curriculum document provides the school with several sections of the KLA document which *do not need to be repeated.*
>
> These include:
>
> - a description of the KLA;
> - a rationale;
> - a platform of beliefs about the KLA;
> - broad outcomes; and
> - generic assessment and reporting strategies.

If, however, you want to identify beliefs and practices unique to your school's operation, additional information should be included.

To document how your school localises the frameworks the following headings offer a possible outline.

Scope and sequence

- an audit activity could be useful to ensure that the scope and sequence of the learning area has been covered; and
- the scope and sequence section should make reference to the ACPs,[7] indicating how they are addressed in this KLA.

Description of students

- if a subgroup of students need to be accommodated in the delivery of this KLA (e.g. students with disabilities in Health and PE), describe these students and how programs are organised to meet their needs.

Assessment and reporting

- assessment and reporting specific to this learning area.

Evaluation

- evaluation procedures specific to this learning area.

Resources

- resources, including kits, reading schemes, activities, etc.

Any other significant aspects of the KLA program

- for example, details of how the learning area is linked to other learning areas through integrated classroom programs.

Representative units of work at each band level may be the easiest way to illustrate how the framework has been adopted and localised in the areas of learning and teaching strategies, ACPs, and assessment and evaluation.[8]

A summary of the strategy using curriculum frameworks and profiles is outlined in Figure 3.2.

Implementation difficulties

The culture of school-based decision making about all aspects of curriculum documentation was the environment into which the ACT frameworks and the national profiles were introduced.

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[7] 'ACPs' are 'Across Curriculum Perspectives'. These comprise educational and societal issues of such significance that they should permeate the curriculum. Nine ACPs are defined, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education; Australian Education; Environment Education; Gender Equity; Information Technology; Language for Understanding Across the Curriculum; Multicultural Education; Special Needs Education; and Work Education.

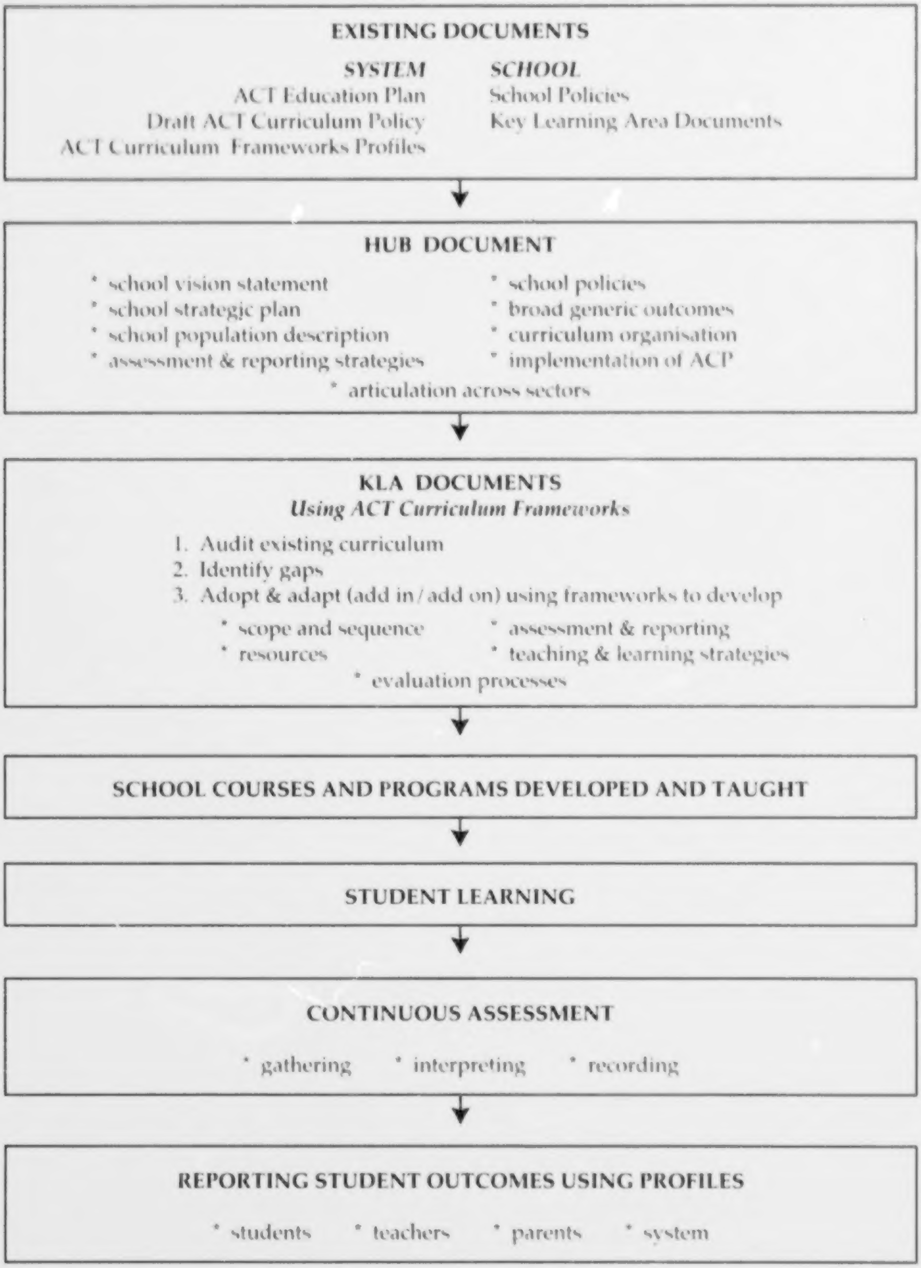
EXISTING DOCUMENTS
SYSTEM
ACT Education Plan
Draft ACT Curriculum Policy
ACT Curriculum Frameworks Profiles
SCHOOL
School Policies
Key Learning Area Documents
HUB DOCUMENT
* school vision statement
* school strategic plan
* school population description
* assessment & reporting strategies
* school policies
* broad generic outcomes
* curriculum organisation
* implementation of ACP
* articulation across sectors
KLA DOCUMENTS
Using ACT Curriculum Frameworks
1. Audit existing curriculum
2. Identify gaps
3. Adopt & adapt (add in / add on) using frameworks to develop
* scope and sequence
* resources
* assessment & reporting
* teaching & learning strategies
* evaluation processes
SCHOOL COURSES AND PROGRAMS DEVELOPED AND TAUGHT
STUDENT LEARNING
CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT
* gathering
* interpreting
* recording
REPORTING STUDENT OUTCOMES USING PROFILES
* students
* teachers
* parents
* system

Figure 3.2 ACT Curriculum Development Strategy using Curriculum Frameworks and Profiles

Despite the professional development and the commitment of the Department's curriculum officers, the frameworks and profiles were not met with equal favour by ACT teachers once they were involved in the two year trial of the profiles. In general the frameworks were received positively by teachers. The main view was that they were very useful documents that would take the pressure away from teachers performing the huge work load of school-based curriculum development. The work of establishing and writing curriculum goals, rationale, platform for teaching and learning and across curriculum perspectives was now unnecessary as they were presented in each KLA framework. The second view was that the documents were the beginning of a centralised curriculum with a much tighter system of curriculum accountability through the School Review process. This accountability was not necessarily welcomed by all teachers.

The national profiles were largely unknown territory for the majority of ACT teachers. In many cases, the underlying principles of outcomes-based education challenged the established procedures in the teaching and learning process. Teachers' comfort zones were being challenged. There was an expectation in the Curriculum Section of the Department that teachers would attend centrally coordinated profile familiarisation professional development.

The national profiles along with ACT curriculum frameworks were introduced as the principal means by which the ACT school system would move towards outcomes-based education. The centrally-provided professional development sought to explain that a move to an outcomes-based approach attempts to recognise the importance of what students know and can do. Participation and commitment of the individual teacher was to be the most significant factor in the early acceptance of the initiatives.

The following points were emphasised by the curriculum officers in their communication with schools:

- teachers can't avoid outcomes, they are already in the thick of them;
- teachers are a focus to enable students to achieve outcomes to realise their abilities and then to maintain and enhance those abilities;
- teachers always talk about moving students from the known to the unknown. To do this teachers need to collect information to find out where students are at;
- teachers need to keep gathering information systematically to discover the extent to which students are progressing;
- profiles are an agreed national language to describe student learning outcomes;
- profiles offer the potential for greater equivalence and agreement between schools about what progress means and how it can be described;
- as teachers we all desire quality outcomes;

- the idea that every child can be educated, make progress and enjoy learning is a comparatively new idea;
- by focusing upon what students know, value and can do, teachers will make schools more inclusive and consequently happier places;
- the profiles can help; and
- the profiles are based upon the concept that all students can progress. The broad sequence of outcomes across the eight levels of the profiles will help teachers to chart that progress.

The development of the ACT curriculum frameworks, and the timeline for publication and circulation to schools, influenced the way schools used both the frameworks and the profiles. The profiles were available nationally some months before the frameworks were ready for distribution. The decision to purchase and send all teachers personal copies of the national profiles, before the frameworks were sent to school libraries, was seen by the teachers receiving the documents to reflect the importance of them and how they were to be used to inform curriculum development, assessment and reporting. The timing of document distribution would continue to influence teachers' perceptions during profile trialing in schools throughout 1995.

Management of the profile trial

A Department Advisory Curriculum Committee (DACC) was established with representation from the Department, principals, parents and the teachers' union. Their brief was to meet regularly to monitor progress of the profile trial. Regular reports were presented from Department officers and reactions of the stakeholders were considered as to the progress of the trial. In the second year, various models for the possible implementation of the profiles were presented to the committee.

The responsibility for managing the trial of the profiles rested with a group of executive teachers from the Department's Studies Section. 'Profile Trialing Coordinators' had responsibility for a district with approximately 25 schools in each, three or four of which were high schools, one or two special settings and the remainder primary schools. Coordinators provided professional development for teachers in a number of 'feeder' primary school and high school clusters. Teachers attended half-day inservice courses armed with the profile document of their choice. However, in 1994 the implementation back at the school was left to teachers to choose whether they became involved beyond these workshops.

The principles on which this stage of the trial were based were:

- trialing means implementing profiles in an exploratory way and assessing their usefulness;
- the focus of trialing the profiles is to improve reporting of student achievement, learning and teaching practice;

- during the trialing period all eight key learning areas would be trialed across the system but not necessarily all within the one school;
- in 1994 a cohort of teachers from each school was involved in the initial trialing. Parents could also be involved in the trial;
- in 1995 all teachers were involved in the trialing process assisted by the 1994 cohort of trialing teachers;
- by the end of the trial period every teacher will have had experience in trialing at least one profile;
- data from trialing is collected and recorded in a consistent and reliable form;
- proposals for trialing are consistent with the trialing guidelines. All trialing proposals to include the generic focus and one or more other foci. The generic focus addresses the question: are the profiles any good? The other focus areas address: what are the profiles good for?
- parents and the community are to be informed by the individual schools about the purpose of the trialing and what is happening.

The ACT has also produced the following material to support the two year profile trial:

- Guidelines for Trialing Profiles 1994-95;
- Profile Trialing 1994-95, Teacher Information; and
- Student Mapping Profile Sheets.

The staff from the Department's central office Studies Section managed the distribution of the profiles to the volunteer trialing teachers in 1994. They organised and presented the profile trialing workshops for each trialing teacher, managed profile trialing coordination according to each school district, devised the questionnaires, analysed the data from the responses and prepared the reports to the Departmental Advisory Curriculum Committee.

In 1994 the Commonwealth Government offered the National Professional Development Program (NPDP) to the professional associations who were willing to run professional development relating to the use of profiles. Most of the ACT Department's Studies Section officers take a leadership role in their professional associations and many are executive officers for these organisations. On behalf of their professional associations they wrote submissions and provided the expert advice for the use of NPDP funds and then managed the 1994 programs. They continued this process for the 1995 NPDP funding program. Studies Section officers thus facilitated the use of NPDP funds to further the use of profiles in the ACT.

At the end of 1994 an internal paper on the use of profiles in ACT schools was drafted by Studies Section officers. Much consideration went into models and options which would suit the ACT school system. This paper was presented to the

DACC in February, then redrafted, re-presented in April 1995 and redrafted in May 1995. The paper was intended to provide the system direction on profile use to be ratified by the Executive of the Department in semester 2, 1995. However the issues of system-wide assessment and reporting and the use of the profiles for recording student achievement and reporting to parents were to converge at this point.

In semester 1 1995, Studies Section officers managed the trialing of profiles by all ACT preschool, primary and high school teachers. They presented half-day profile trialing workshops to all teachers and managed the profile trialing coordination for each school district. Two profile trialing coordinators were nominated from each school to be responsible for the carriage of this work at school level.

Schools were given a great deal of freedom in how they approached the trial. The learning area to be trialed was at the discretion of the school and the emphasis for trialing was also a school decision. Some schools elected to reference their curriculum documents against the profile outcomes, others attempted to use the profiles to support the integration of the curriculum and yet others trialed reporting to parents in the language, or a modified form of the language, of the profiles.

There was one expectation of trialing teachers that was required from the central office, however. All teachers were asked to map five students against the outcomes across all strands of a key learning area. At this point in the trial, if not before, ACT teachers started to talk negatively about work loads, the complexity of the documents, the usefulness of the documents, and perceived inconsistencies in the sequence of some outcome statements. Primary teachers were concerned that they would be required to map thirty or more students against all outcomes in eight key learning areas; high school teachers were overwhelmed at the prospect of mapping up to 150 students with whom they had contact. In response to this concern it was decided through the DACC that the mapping sheets would not be required. Schools were encouraged to devise their own methods of student profile record keeping.

Information from the profile trials was collected by Studies Section officers through the establishment of Profile Consultative Groups. These groups consisted of the teachers responsible for the trial in each school. They were managed by Studies Section officers and met regularly to provide comment and feedback and also constructed KLA questionnaires for response by groups of trialing teachers in semester 2 of 1995.

Profile trial overview

All schools were required to respond to the questionnaires. The information was collected by learning area and analysed by the curriculum officer with expertise in the area of study. The comments from schools were presented in descriptive form and the issues collated by the curriculum officers. Although there were specific key learning area comments about the usefulness or the difficulties with each of the components of the documents—level statements, outcome statements, pointers, language for reporting and format—there were common threads that could be reported as the view of teachers across learning areas.

Across the system more positive responses to the profiles and ESL scales were received in 1995 than in 1994. Comments were also more thoughtful and if not positive at least constructively critical. The frameworks were being used for curriculum construction and teachers commented favourably on guidelines to address strands of learning that had hitherto been neglected. For example, the 'Viewing' strand in English was met with cautious approval.

In general, primary teachers were more positive than those in high schools and there was an impression that primary teachers were more familiar with the documents than secondary teachers. In several areas, teachers were developing report formats to reflect the learning strands in the frameworks and profiles, including appropriate language for reporting to parents.

The lack of knowledge about the profiles and ESL scales was obvious in the inability of teachers to comment and the fact that many teachers had participated reluctantly in the data collecting processes. On balance, a significant number of schools were not using the documents effectively at the conclusion of the two year trial.

Specific issues identified by teachers in the trial

Teachers working with students in special education settings

As with mainstream teachers, the responses and views of teachers in settings for students with learning difficulties and disabilities varied greatly. These teachers invariably trialed the English profile and responses reflect this factor. Some teachers concluded that a level prior to the current level one is required to reflect the learning outcomes of students with special learning needs. Other teachers consider that the breadth of the current outcome statements can accommodate the description of learning outcomes for all students regardless of the level of their achievement.

Workloads

The issue that was most frequently identified by teachers across learning areas and sectors was anxiety about workloads concerning the introduction of frameworks and profiles. It was also clear from the responses that the work in implementing profiles was perceived by teachers to be in addition to the work that they were currently doing and not a change to their current practice.

Sequencing of the outcome statements and the levels of learning

In teacher responses it was apparent that the ability to comment knowledgeably on the sequence of levels within the profiles and ESL scales depended on familiarity with the documents and teacher confidence in the learning area. In areas such as Science and Technology, primary teachers considered they lacked expertise in making judgements on the sequence of levels. In Health and PE, Science, SOSE, Mathematics and Technology there were strong indications that high school teachers were not familiar enough with the documents to comment knowledgeably on the sequence of learning outcomes.

Respondents in SOSE, the Arts and some other areas indicated that the higher the profile level the greater the dispute over the quality of the sequencing. In LOTE the Levels 1-4 were felt to be accurate but Levels 5-8 were found to be confusing. In ESL most teachers found problems with the sequences and reflected on and reported their own understanding of how students learn language.

Size of documents

Mathematics teachers found difficulties with the volume of information within each outcome. Many SOSE teachers, usually those least familiar with the profiles, suggested cutting the document into band levels for easier use.

Pedagogical change

In Technology and English, pedagogical change will be required for implementation of the profiles. The Viewing strand in English has been received with enthusiasm, but cautiously. The potential for the Technology document to effect a pedagogical change and support a largely new learning area in primary schools is strong, but many teachers indicated that they were not confident about their own ability to teach this 'new' discipline effectively.

Professional development

Involvement with professional development in curriculum was linked to a positive attitude to the documents. Some high school science teachers who had previously been the most critical were now attending professional development sessions on curriculum, learning about the profiles and were becoming less critical.

During the final weeks of the trial, industrial unrest was to have a direct impact on the collection of information from schools. The summative report of the profile trials' had to be completed without adequate consultation with teachers in schools. The curriculum officers who had responsibility for the final report wrote without the opportunity to meet with teachers to ensure that all of the issues had been identified. This was clearly an unsatisfactory conclusion to the trial in the ACT.

The picture in 1996

The introduction of the profiles into ACT government schools has been far from universally welcomed by teachers. However there are significant numbers of individual teachers and schools that acknowledge that the frameworks and the profiles have the capacity to focus and improve the work of teaching and learning. Individuals and teaching teams are actively working to incorporate the profiles into their own practice as well as into curriculum documentation. These early creative initiatives of groups of ACT teachers will inevitably influence others in the process of change to an outcomes approach.

Despite the positive views and experiences of some teachers, the strength of the negative feeling was particularly evident during industrial bans imposed by members of the ACT branch of the Australian Education Union (AEU). Towards the end of the 1995 trial and to August 1996, when an industrial agreement was finalised, bans were placed on school-based curriculum development. The bans specifically mentioned the use of the ACT Frameworks and the national profiles to inform this curriculum work.

The industrial bans imposed by the ACT Branch of the AEU in October 1995 as teachers sought a salary increase covered many issues other than the work associated with curriculum development and profiles and frameworks. However the motion passed by the AEU Branch Council in October 1995 stated, in relation to the profiles and frameworks:

> 4a. Cease all development work in schools and colleges on externally imposed Curriculum and Assessment initiatives. This includes Profile and Curriculum Frameworks, Strand Reporting and Course Frameworks.[8]

The bans that were imposed in October were reaffirmed by the membership in December 1995.[9] A circular to AEU members on the 16 February from the Branch Secretary provided an exemption for teachers working on curriculum and assessment initiatives in the central office.

> The bans ... relating to assessment and reporting matters apply to school based members and not to members of the schools office sub branch.'[10]

The continuation of the bans was to be endorsed by acclamation by the membership at a subsequent stop work meeting.

The industrial resolutions which took effect in October/November 1995 had the effect of creating a hiatus period in the introduction of frameworks and profiles in ACT government primary and high schools.

The Enterprise Bargaining Agreement finalised in August 1996 included agreement to implement curriculum profiles in ACT schools. The agreement recognised 'that ACT Frameworks and the National Profiles ... should be used in schools as an aspect of:

1. curriculum development and renewal;
2. informing the planning of class programs and units of work; and
3. school based reporting of student achievement, and the outcomes of the teaching and learning process on a system wide basis'.

The agreement came so late in the year that, to some extent, this hiatus period continued till year's end.

Summary of timeline for the development and implementation of frameworks, profiles and ESL scales in the ACT

The various ways in which officers and teachers of the ACT Department of Education and Training have contributed to the evolution of the curriculum statements and profiles at national level are described in the early parts of this chapter. Developments since mid 1993, when the national documents were referred back to the states and territories for decisions about implementation, are also described in the chapter but for convenience are presented in summary form in Figure 3.3.

1993	*ACT Mathematics Curriculum Framework was launched.* Studies Section set up writing parties to update the draft curriculum frameworks in each key learning area to include the national statements in the scope and sequence section and to reflect outcomes-based education. Consultation on the frameworks took place with system, academic and community groups.
1994	Profiles in each of the eight key learning areas and ESL scales were published and distributed to all schools. Trialing of profiles and ESL scales began on a voluntary basis. Approximately 1200 teachers were involved from preschools, primary schools and high schools. Workshops to familiarise all trialing teachers with the profiles were run in all key learning areas and ESL. Three response sheets were requested: two from the trialing teachers, the first for the end of semester 1, the second for the end of term 3. This elicited a 70% response, and the third from the profile coordinators, towards the end of semester 2. ACT Curriculum Frameworks published and distributed to schools. A few schools began using the frameworks, profiles and ESL scales to renew curriculum.
1995	All permanent teachers and those who have a responsibility for reporting student progress are involved in trialing a profile. The minimum requirement in this trialing process is that all teachers map five students in one KLA or on ESL scales. Profile and ESL scales familiarisation workshops are being offered for all teachers new to trialing and for teachers who have chosen to use a different profile to the one they trialed in 1994. Some schools use frameworks, profiles and ESL scales to renew curriculum. Some teachers use language of profiles and scales for reporting to students and parents. October: Industrial bans on the use of frameworks and profiles.
1996	Industrial bans continue until August, when an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement includes the use of profiles, frameworks and school-based curriculum development. Some schools modify their report formats to reflect eight learning areas and outcomes education.

Figure 3.3 Summary of Development and Implementation in the ACT

Three models of implementing the frameworks and profiles

Several ACT schools have actively incorporated the frameworks and the profiles into aspects of their curriculum, teaching, assessment and reporting cycle. Teachers who have accepted this challenge speak with enthusiasm about their projects. The initiatives below are only examples and would be replicated by other teachers and schools.

Canberra High School Mathematics Department

Two of the mathematics staff have comprehensively mapped the mathematics profile outcomes against the school course content for Years 7 to 10. They used a combination of a profiles and frameworks computer data base made available to interested schools and manual cross referencing to the profile document. Following the initial mapping they produced a document that described the outcomes that would be accomplished when teaching the units of work. To ensure that the mathematics course at Canberra High School is comprehensive in terms of the profile outcomes they analysed the data to ensure that all outcomes had been covered. The teachers using this document are now in a position to report directly on the achievement of individual students in relation to the course and the outcomes of the teaching and learning process. A further unintended benefit of the mapping process was a review of the sequence of the learning outcomes and the match with the school course of study.

Gilmore Primary School

Gilmore Primary School used the opportunity of the system's trialing of the profiles to assist in developing a more balanced and comprehensive curriculum throughout the school. The school decided in 1994 to trial the use of the ACT frameworks and the profiles in all eight areas of learning. The decision was a whole school decision and the 30 staff members were involved in the trial. Staff already using the profiles worked in teams to plan, program and evaluate their units of work. These staff could now identify and document the learning outcomes that would be targeted across learning areas throughout the integrated curriculum As a result, streamlined integrated curriculum programming procedures have been developed, generic outcomes across learning areas are being determined and enhanced assessment and reporting procedures developed.

Arawang Primary School

Arawang Primary School teaching staff have also developed an integrated curriculum. The core of the curriculum is the English document which contains a strand for the processes and skills of 'Information Literacy'. This Information Literacy or 'research skills' strand facilitates the integration of the curriculum across all other key learning areas. The Frameworks are included as the foundation document for all curriculum documents and the units of work for K-6 have been referenced to 'possible profile outcomes' in the English profile. The curriculum integration is explicit and the outcomes that can be achieved in other learning areas are documented within the unit of work.

The common thread that runs through each of these examples is the integration of the profiles as part of curriculum planning and classroom teaching programs. Once this foundation work has been commenced teachers are in a very strong position to assess student achievement and report in relation to the profile outcomes.

The Outcomes and Reporting Section of the ACT Department of Education and Training

Almost at the same time as the industrial situation was emerging in the ACT and schools stopped work on curriculum development and the use of the profiles, the Department of Education and Training implemented a 1995 budget initiative of the ACT Government and established a new section in the department. This section has the responsibility for assessment and reporting and outcomes-based education.

The industrial bans on teachers' use of frameworks and profiles meant that schools who wished to move forward with school-based initiatives in outcomes-based curriculum models have been greatly hampered in their work. However the industrial bans allowed the small new 'Outcomes and Reporting' team some time to research and review and discuss at length the issues surrounding the forthcoming implementation of the profiles and outcomes-based education in the context of school-based curriculum development in ACT schools. The bans also allowed the new section time to formulate models for professional development in changing teachers' thinking about embedding an outcomes approach into their professional practice as well as models for reporting learning outcomes as part of the regular cycle of parent information, interviews and reporting that is a routine part of the school program.

Apart from the industrial bans, a further factor was to influence ACT teachers' perceptions about the future of the profiles. Towards the end of the 1995 trial the *Report of the Review of Outcomes and Profiles in New South Wales Schooling* (the 'Eltis Report' described in Chapter 5) was published.[11] This report recommended that NSW change direction in curriculum development and profiles were no longer to be used as previously intended. The ACT, as an island in the midst of NSW, was to be marginally affected by the NSW announcement. Individual ACT teachers who were hopeful that the profiles would be 'off the agenda' interpreted the NSW announcement to mean just this and believed that the ACT would follow suit. The rumours that abound in a small system confirmed their view that the profiles were just a flash in the pan and a fad that would hopefully go away. This was not to be!

The ACT Outcomes and Reporting section was engaged in a project that would ensure that the links to the national profiles and outcomes education would continue to influence curriculum development and assessment and reporting of student learning. A major aspect of the brief of the new section was to provide advice to Government on the most appropriate way to assess and report on student achievement at a system level as well as to assist schools to improve their reporting procedures for parents. In his statement on the introduction of system-wide assessment and reporting to the House of Assembly, the Minister for Education and Training, Mr Bill Stefaniak, announced:

> Preliminary work (on assessment and reporting student outcomes) has also started in our primary and high schools with teachers working for the past two years trialing the 'Curriculum Profiles for Australian Schools' ... These documents provide teachers with a reference of sequential learning outcomes in each area of the curriculum. They are used in conjunction with the ACT Curriculum Frameworks which provide the basis for curriculum planning and teaching.[12]

The group of four teachers who are the 'Outcomes and Reporting team' collected examples of assessment instruments with the cooperation and assistance of all of the states and commercial suppliers. They reviewed the available instruments against a number of criteria, one of which is the best fit with school-based curriculum development and the ACT frameworks and the profiles. The decision as to which assessment instrument will be used in the ACT to collect system-wide data on student achievement was referred to a reference group which included parents, principals, the ACT Branch of the Australian Education Union and officers of the Department of Education and Training. The reference group recommended that:

- the ACER *Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers (DART) English* assessment materials[13] be implemented in Years 3 and 5 in 1997;
- ACT schools trial the items for the Year 5 DART numeracy assessment that is currently in development;
- parents who do not wish their child to participate have the opportunity to 'opt out' of the summative tasks in the assessment;
- all participating students receive a System report through the school. This report will relate student performance to the national profiles, will be outcomes-based and indicate the performance of the child in relation to the ACT year cohort on a developmental continuum;
- strict provisions for privacy of the data are implemented by principals, teachers, school boards and the Department.

A further indication to schools, and in particular to principals, that frameworks and profiles will continue to be central to curriculum in the ACT is indicated in a draft document issued to principals for comment. The document is a brief questionnaire for school communities to use to self-evaluate their curriculum planning and documentation. The questionnaire is intended for use during the five year cycle of School Quality Assurance review which has been established in ACT schools. In relation to the frameworks and profiles the questionnaires ask schools for the following information:

> Are your school documents linked to ACT Curriculum Framework Documents? Please indicate when the planned review of each of the learning areas is to take place.

Indicate the extent to which the curriculum guidelines for the assessment and reporting of student outcomes in key learning areas are informed by the National Profiles.

Strategies for schools in the implementation of the profiles

The issues that teachers 'flagged' in the two-year trials remain as problems in implementation and require addressing. In summary, teachers expressed concern at the complexity of the profile language. In particular, teachers were concerned at the prospect of reporting student outcomes to parents in the language of the documents. Primary teachers were overwhelmed at the prospect of managing and using the profiles in each of the eight learning areas and considered the assessment and record keeping of individual outcomes in 40 strands of the eight learning areas to be totally unmanageable. High school teachers were even more critical of the record keeping that would be required for up to 150 students that they taught each week in one or two learning areas. Many teachers believed that the answer to this complex task was for schools or preferably the Department to develop or buy a computer program that would ease the workload of record keeping.

Whilst acknowledging the need for an effective computer program that would serve the dual purpose of facilitating record keeping of student achievement and reporting to parents, change to an outcomes approach would not take place merely through a computer program recording results of established teaching practice. A computer program—'Student Profiles', developed by a practising school principal in South Australia—was made available at minimal cost to all government and non-government schools. The program is a curriculum or course planning device for teachers. It contains the ACT frameworks, the national profiles and the ESL scales. It has the facility to search by keyword across one or all of these documents simultaneously and then to select all statements and outcomes with references to the selected word. It enables the teacher to cut and paste statements and outcomes into other documents that they are using for planning, teaching and learning. A major benefit of the program for teachers who use an integrated approach in their class practice is the potential for identifying thematically linked learning outcomes across a number of learning areas. The wide distribution of this computer program, which is designed to assist teachers in their curriculum development and course planning, is an indication of the model for implementation that is being adopted in ACT government primary and high schools.

How are the frameworks and the profiles to be used in ACT primary and high schools?

The following points summarise the main purposes for which the frameworks and profiles are to be used in ACT government schools:

- the frameworks and the profiles are to be used to inform school-based curriculum development;

- they are to be used to inform the planning of classroom teaching and assessment;
- they are to be used to inform reporting to parents and the system.

To address the issues raised by teachers in the profile trial, a number of system initiatives are in progress:

- professional development programs are being offered to schools to assist them in understanding the principles of outcomes education. These courses are highly practical in that a teaching team develops a class program informed by the profiles. The course covers planning an outcomes based unit of work, assessment and reporting strategies;
- practical support is being provided to schools in the development of reporting formats that meet the needs of the school community and which reflect an outcomes approach to education;
- a South Australian initiated project to develop outcomes statements in language that is readily understood by parents is being jointly developed in SA, ACT and Queensland schools with assistance from parents. Funding for this project has been provided by the Commonwealth through the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs. The project aims to facilitate the reporting of learning outcomes to parents;
- a computer program is being developed to complement the parent reporting project. The aim of this ACT work is to facilitate school record keeping of student outcomes and to enable the class teacher to select and modify the learning area outcome statements to ensure an individualised report of student learning which is meaningful to other teachers and parents. The program will not require teachers to record their judgement of student performance against every outcome but will enable teachers to make a global judgement at the strand level in each learning area.

These initiatives, which are designed to support teachers in the implementation of outcomes education, will provide some practical support during a transition stage. Real change to an outcomes approach where the learning success of each student is central to the planning of class work will occur at different rates with individual teachers in different schools. Perhaps the most critical element of all will be the professional leadership of school executive staff members who have the vision to take ACT government schools forward in outcomes education.

Key competencies

The Mayer 'key competencies'[14] are explicitly mentioned in the ACT Year 11 and 12 Course Frameworks. This should mean that students will be assessed and reported on Key competency achievement as a subset of the criteria of general courses. However, not all of the competencies are explicitly mentioned in all of the Course Frameworks, nor are they given the same emphasis from one subject area to another. The ACT Year 11 and 12 Course Frameworks are currently in a trialing phase and consequently some minor revisions are expected over the next two years. Key competencies will be validated and more explicitly drawn out in the strands and criteria within the frameworks.

The ACT strongly believes that students have the pivotal role in understanding, developing and demonstrating achievement of the key competencies. The key competencies require a shift away from teachers 'teaching' to students 'learning, understanding and developing' skills. Students would need to seek opportunities to demonstrate the quality of their achievement of the skills and processes inherent in the key competencies. It is intended that teaching approaches be made more explicit in course documents to facilitate students' development of key competencies.

Assessment could be facilitated through the development of examples of assessment tasks that enable judgements to be made about general criteria, specific vocational criteria and key competencies. The ACT increasingly favours descriptive reporting of student achievement of the key competencies and the development of portfolios and 'learning logs' by students.

A recent report on the ACT Key Competency pilot project recommended that work undertaken so far be extended to include students and teachers from all levels (K-10).[10] Some high schools and some primary schools have already included reference to the key competencies in curriculum documents and in reporting to parents.

The non-government schools' approach to national statements and profiles

ACT government and non-government schools all come under the jurisdiction of the ACT Minister for Education and Training with delegation to the Chief Executive of the Department of Education and Training. However non-government schools are independent in the management and the organisation of their schools. The non-government schools office has the responsibility for registration of these schools and conducts a review on a five year cycle of programs that are being offered in individual schools.

The Education Act of 1937 indicates that the Minister may determine standards which are to apply to non-government schools. The current standard required is that students are able to move between schools, government and non-government, without disadvantage. The application of this standard is very real. At senior secondary level a large proportion of students completing Year 10 in non-government schools moves to the government secondary college system to complete Years 11 and 12. The reasons for individual transfers are diverse but a major factor is the Year K-10 structure of several of the non-government schools. A further factor that draws the government and the non-government curriculum together is the Year 11 and 12 course accreditation. The courses in both sectors are accredited through the Board of Senior Secondary Studies and therefore the requirements for registration apply regardless of sector.

With respect to the national statements and profiles, the advice of the non-government schools office that has the responsibility for registration and accreditation of the curriculum is that all the non-government schools are moving towards acceptance of the national initiatives. This acceptance and involvement is most evident in the work of Catholic Education. A summary of their involvement in outcomes-based education and the use of the frameworks and profiles follows.

ACT Catholic Education

Developments in implementation of the national statements and profiles in the Catholic schools sector of the ACT

To begin the process of implementation, an initial two-day conference was convened on 24-25 January 1994 at the Australian Catholic University (Signadou Campus). Keynote speakers were Dr Paul Brock (National Board of Employment, Education and Training [NBEET], CURASS and adviser to Federal Education Minister John Dawkins), Ms Di Kerr (ACT Department of Education and Training, CURASS) and Mr Gerry White (Acting Director of the Catholic Education Office in South Australia). Two senior members of staff (the principal and one other) in all ACT Catholic schools were invited to participate.

The goals of the conference were:

- familiarisation with the background to and content of the national documents;
- helping to shape an Archdiocesan response; and
- to assist in local level inservicing of the national curriculum agenda.

As an important element of the initial inservice, participants contributed, through workshops, towards preparing a broadly based response. The belief statements developed were as follows:

- School-based curriculum development is a responsible stepping stone for exploring the potential of an outcomes-based approach to education incorporating the national statements and profiles.
- Critical to any coherent teaching program is the defensible relationship among vision, goals, content/skills, evaluation and, of course, assessment and reporting. The national agenda has the potential to assist in this regard.
- A renewed national focus on assessment is in evidence. Clearly there is a demand for teachers to make much of what they do more explicit. In the national profiles this is emerging in the form of developing:
  - statements of expected learning outcomes;
  - pointers which provide detailed indicators of attainment; and
  - annotated work samples.

- There is likely to be some debate as the profiles are released and analysed. We need to critically examine the content and implications of this debate.

- The reporting to parents needs to be more reflective of the actual knowledge, skills and values possessed by the student. Consequently we have witnessed the development of the competency-based movement. Common across most of the major committees is the demand to make school reports more employer-friendly.

- There is a lot of energy being expended at the state and national level developing frameworks and profiles. Consultation is occurring on a 'limited' basis. The product will provide a valuable reference point as we continually review our curriculum structures and offerings.

- A modest budget allocation was provided to inservice the national statements and profiles once completed in June 1993. This may help in understanding the proposed common framework. It may not be sufficient to generate ownership unless teachers can be convinced that the statements and profiles add to the teaching and learning program.

- There is a feeling of insecurity creeping in as many teachers learn about certain aspects of the developments and fear dramatic change. What is being developed is, in one sense, not revolutionary. Outcomes-based education has the potential to tighten up loose aspects of professional linkaging and also provide invaluable reference points.

Consultants attended detailed briefings for the non-government sector facilitated by the Curriculum Corporation. The advice and direction provided has contributed significantly towards the nature of the Catholic school response in the ACT. The Catholic schools have a long tradition of school-based curriculum development. This historical situation, the manageable number of schools and the research on effective professional development indicated that a school based response to the challenge was appropriate.

Schools generally were inserviced by the Catholic Education Office consultants on staff development days. There were three segments to the inservice program:

- 'Political and educational background';

- 'The nature of the National Statements and Profiles'; and

- 'Advice regarding implementation'.

The above inservice program was supplemented by NPDP-funded professional development through subject and other group associations; and ACT Department of Education and Training Courses coordinated through the O'Connell Education Centre.

In the Catholic schools sector, 1994 and 1995 were essentially trial and pilot years. Schools were issued with a limited number of the national statements and profiles documents and invited to purchase more through the Curriculum Corporation. The following findings became clear in research conducted locally:

- all schools, in a gradual fashion, have begun to plan with outcomes;
- a number of teachers were finding it difficult to develop programs using general outcome statements. Staff were reluctant to shift from an objectives and content approach to an outcomes approach;
- teachers needed to make meaning of the introduction of national statements and profiles and, as a consequence, needed a more thorough grounding in the implications of outcomes-based education;
- such change is a paradigm shift for many and implications for programming, assessment and reporting will be evolutionary and take a number of years;
- senior secondary schools have been using an outcomes model for some time and are more familiar with its workings as a basis for designing Board approved school-based courses;
- a number of Catholic schools in the ACT make use of curriculum materials developed in NSW, for example, English K-6.[18] A large number also utilise the ACT Department of Education and Training Frameworks;
- the rate of absorbing the potential lessons from outcomes-based education has varied from school to school. The registration requirements for ACT independent schools counsel that Catholic schools be 'reasonably in step with' national developments. Such a requirement sensibly presupposes a differential response given site-based responsibility in the ACT. All schools are, however, interacting with the core documents, albeit at different levels.

Anticipated emphases in 1996 and 1997

At the time of writing, emphases for 1996 and 1997 were intended to be the following:

- concentrating on aligning common principles inherent in outcomes, teaching and learning activities, assessment and reporting;
- emphasising the vital role of authentic assessment;
- continuing to explore the implications of outcomes-based education;
- developing a K-6 Personal Development/Health/Physical Education curriculum document using the national statements and profiles as a platform; and
- running courses on the rationale for, and the nature of, change.

The model proposed will be adopted only in so far as it has meaning for teachers. National statements and profiles are seen to offer 'something' positive to the teaching and learning process. The implications are broad and far reaching. Clearly teaching will become more student-centred, more challenging and its outcomes more explicit.

However, the breadth of the challenge is considerable and will take a number of years to surmount. The more resource support, the more effective the transition.

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4 From Piloting to Mainstreaming: The Northern Territory Journey

Shantha E Jacob

Preamble: The Northern Territory context

The Northern Territory Board of Studies (NTBOS), established in 1984, is a statutory body representative of educationists, parents, employers and other special interest groups. The major functions of the Board are to provide policy advice for all curriculum and assessment matters to all schools, from preschool to Year 12+, to accredit territory-developed courses, and to issue certificates at the end of junior secondary and during senior secondary education. It has the responsibility for ensuring that the school curriculum is consistent throughout the Northern Territory (NT) and comparable with the curriculum in other Australian school systems, while at the same time, having the flexibility to provide for the special needs of all students. It also ensures that the school curriculum is consistent with Australia-wide initiatives such as the outcomes approach to learning and plans to implement 'key competencies'. Although a statutory body, the Board does not have a staff of its own, apart from one executive officer. The chairman of the Board is a senior officer of the NT Department of Education (NTDE) and the Board's work is carried out by Board of Studies Services, one of the four divisions of the Department.

Overall curriculum requirements for all scho[illegible] are described in the Board's *Common Curriculum Statement.*[1] This statement includes the Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling in Australia (the 'Hobart Declaration')[2] (see chapter 1) and encompasses government policies on such matters as gender equity and equality of access, Aboriginal education and provision for special needs. It outlines the components of the school curriculum and requirements for implementation. These policies are non-negotiable.

The curriculum is organised into eleven subject areas. These are English, Mathematics, Science, Social Education, Languages, Health and Physical Education, Performing and Visual Arts, and—in Years 8 to 10—Technical Studies, Home Economics, Business Education and Career Education. Computer Education is a subject area taught through the other subjects. Technology is not a subject area in primary schools. The Board Approved Curriculum for each subject area, other than Computer Education, comprises a Subject Curriculum Statement and a Board Approved Course of Study. Computer Education requirements are described in a Computer Education Policy Statement.

The Board Approved Special Category Curriculum—Foundation Studies, General Studies and Intensive English—caters for students in post primary institutions in remote communities and Aboriginal students of secondary age enrolled through the

NT Secondary Correspondence School or secondary schools. A Curriculum Framework for Present and Future Lifestyles has been developed for students with special needs.

Essential generic competencies which include the Mayer key competencies[3] are identified in the *Common Curriculum Statement* for implementation. These competencies are mapped and documented in all Stage 1 (generally Year 11) senior secondary courses accredited since 1995.

The implementation of the Board Approved Curriculum is a school matter and schools can have a strong influence on the way their students' learning program is shaped.

The general principles guiding assessment practice in NT schools are contained in the Board's *Common Assessment Statement.*[4] Assessment guidelines for individual subjects, T (Transition) to Year 10, appear in the Subject Curriculum Statements and detailed assessment requirements are incorporated in each Board Approved Course of Study.

The Early Childhood Screening and Assessment Program provides guidelines for T to Year 3, and the Multilevel Assessment Program (MAP) currently provides an external measure of some aspects of English and Mathematics at Years 5 and 7 (Years 4 and 6, from 1997) in urban schools and for students aged 11 to 16 in non-urban Aboriginal schools. There is also writing moderation in Year 7.

Year 10 English and Mathematics are assessed through a combination of externally moderated school assessment items and 'common instruments of assessment' (CIAs). Moderation of components of school assessment is also a feature of Science and Social Education.

Introduction

There have been significant changes in the management needs of schools over the last decade. These have resulted from the provisions made in *Directions for the Eighties*[5] and *Towards the 90s: Excellence, Accountability and Devolution in Education,*[6] in response to the desires of the wider community. The major changes have been in decision making powers of schools; the expectations and roles of educational leaders and teachers; the level of support; curriculum content; assessment of student achievement; technology and post compulsory education. These changes are all aimed at improving teaching and learning and school practices and, ultimately, to improve learning outcomes for all students. The outcomes approach to education also aims to achieve the same purpose and is closely related to some of these developments—for example, it can be a means of ensuring greater accountability when schools are given more freedom.

The NT has been involved in the national collaborative curriculum development project, which resulted in the production of the Statements and Profiles for Australian Schools, from its very inception. The NT was represented in all key bodies including Directors of Curriculum, Steering Committees, the Curriculum and Assessment Committee (CURASS), reference groups for the eight learning areas and the English as a Second Language (ESL) Scales, and in one case, through membership of a writing team. Those involved in various capacities are now responsible for the implementation of profiling in NT schools. The relative stability of the infrastructure at the Department's Board of Studies Services Division and the NT Board of Studies contributes a sense of history, purpose and continuity. Most of the curriculum specialists contributed in significant ways to the shaping of the Statements and Profiles for Australian Schools. Aspects of the conceptual framework for these documents are reflected in the NT Common and Board Approved curriculum. These officers are continuing to make decisions about how best to bring about a convergence between the NT curricula and the nationally agreed profiles, following the Board's decision in 1995 to implement profiling in all schools as a result of the findings of the pilot program described later in the chapter.

From 1990 to 1993, NT teachers were involved, to varying degrees, in the development of each of the statements and profiles through the consultation and validation processes. From 1993 to 1996, some were involved in National Professional Development Program (NPDP) funded national projects, for example collecting work samples, developing units of work and trialing profiles for various professional associations, in addition to being part of NT activities.

On completion of the national collaborative curriculum development activities, our Minister referred the nationally developed documents to the NT Board of Studies, which overviews and sets curriculum directions for all NT schools including non-government schools. In the latter half of 1993, the Board decided to go ahead with the notion of profiling student progress through an outcomes approach to learning, teaching and assessing, and to establish a schedule to introduce and implement its decision. Two officers were appointed to conceptualise and manage the program. The brief for the program was to 'mainstream profiling' (see next paragraph), in the best way possible, in all schools for the compulsory years of schooling. The program commenced in 1994.

Outcomes Profiling in the NT: The beginning

From the outset it was clear that profiling through an outcomes approach to learning would have an impact on all aspects of teaching and learning at school and system levels and that simultaneous advancement in most of these aspects would be required for the program to move forward. 'Profiling' refers to the charting of student progress along 'progress maps' or developmental continua which describe the 'field' of a learning area. The reference points along these maps are outcomes of increasing complexity. 'Mainstreaming profiling' refers to the act of rendering an outcomes orientation the norm in every classroom so that it permeates the planning, programming, assessing and reporting done by teachers. It does not mean that education will be outcomes-driven but that education will be informed by outcomes.

The foci for 1994 were mainly the development of an overview of the elements of the program and determining policies to commence the program, professional development of teachers and public education.

In the NT, the major elements of the program are:

- professional development activities for the implementors;
- policy development;
- curriculum review and development;
- exploratory implementation (piloting);
- development of an implementation model, timeline and a support structure;
- development of guidelines on monitoring student progress through assessment, record-keeping and reporting;
- use of software for record-keeping and related functions of system and school-based monitoring;
- exploring implications of profiling for the NT Assessment Program (currently undertaken in Years 5, 7 and 10);
- exploring implications of profiling for certification (the Junior Secondary Studies Certificate issued on completion of Year 10);
- mobilising all concerned, including non-government systems, to mainstream profiling;
- familiarisation activities for the general community; and
- collaborative activities with other systems and contributions to the national debate and database.

These elements are unlikely to be different from those in other systems and not all of them have been dealt with at this time. Most will be on-going for a number of years. The mediation of our curriculum in the processes of mainstreaming outcomes profiling requires scrutiny of all current curricular practices both at the school level and the system level. The challenge is that this should be done in the light of the philosophy and processes of profiling and the contents of the nationally developed documents with a view to supplementing or complementing current practices or replacing those seen as inappropriate or unhelpful.

Mainstreaming of profiling in all schools in the compulsory years of schooling is to be carried out through the medium of our curriculum which is developed through the collaborative structures and procedures of the NT Board of Studies. The emphasis is on mainstreaming profiling through outcomes-based learning described in the NT curriculum and not through the nationally developed documents. However, the Board encourages the convergence of the NT curriculum and the nationally developed documents to the extent that it is practicable and desirable.

The diagram in Figure 4.1 illustrates how curriculum development in the NT is seen to be influenced by the Statements and Profiles for Australian Schools.

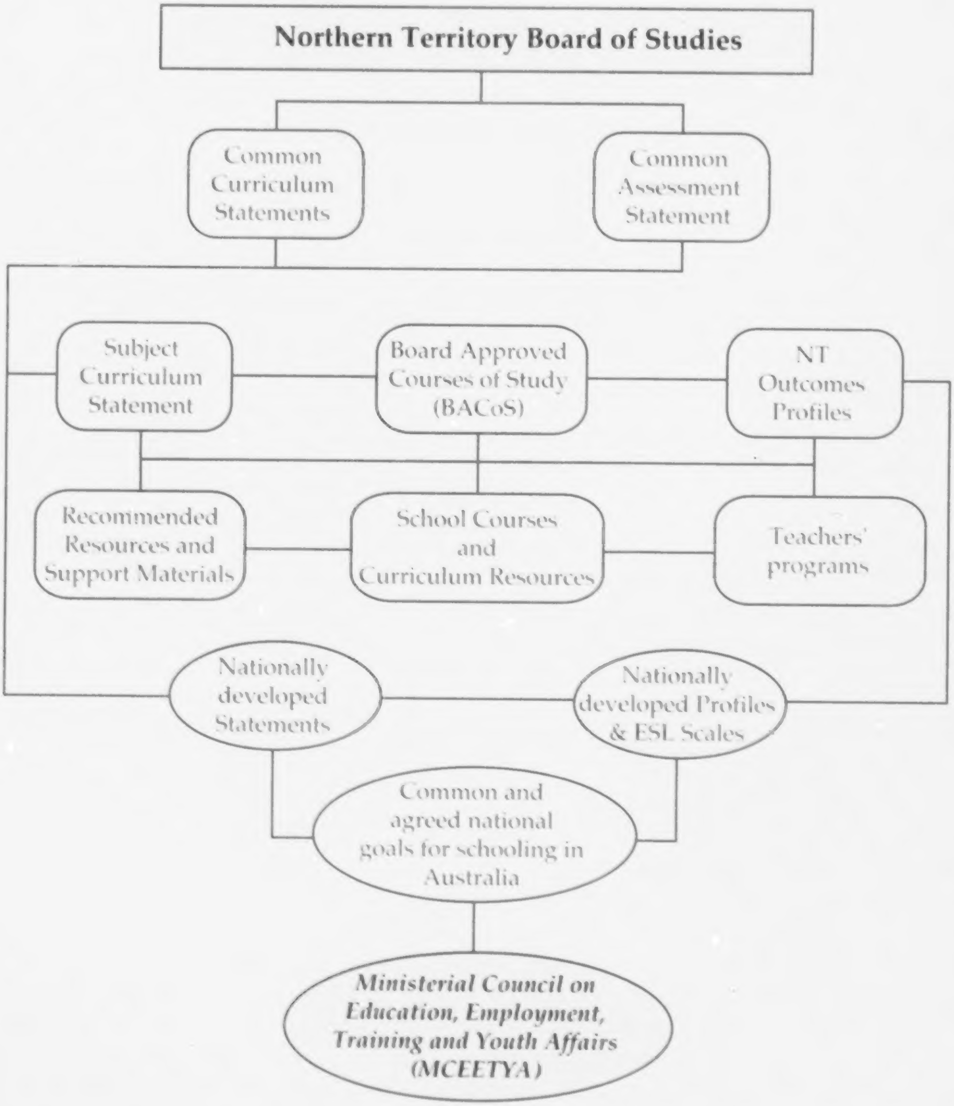
Northern Territory Board of Studies
Common Curriculum Statements
Common Assessment Statement
Subject Curriculum Statement
Board Approved Courses of Study (BACoS)
NT Outcomes Profiles
Recommended Resources and Support Materials
School Courses and Curriculum Resources
Teachers' programs
Nationally developed Statements
Nationally developed Profiles & ESL Scales
Common and agreed national goals for schooling in Australia
Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA)

Figure 4.1 Curriculum Development in the NT in Relation to Statements and Profiles for Australian Schools

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At the present time, the NT Outcomes Profiles are presented as documents separate from the Subject Curriculum Statements. In the long term, Learning Area Statements will be developed to include the broad outcomes of learning (NT Outcomes Profiles), links with other learning areas/subjects and the nationally developed documents, and how the learning area will be developed from T-10 ('Transition' to Year 10) in addition to other pertinent information currently in the Subject Curriculum Statements.

Eventually all NT Board approved curriculum—Learning Area Curriculum Statements, Board Approved Courses of Study, support materials—as well as endorsed support materials will be as consistent with the scope and spirit of the Statements and Profiles for Australian Schools as possible and as desirable, within the context of NT priorities and emphases outlined in the Board's policy documents, the *Common Curriculum Statement*[7] and the *Common Assessment Statement.*[8] Both policies are currently being reviewed in order to support the mainstreaming of profiling and other system initiatives.

While an outcomes approach to learning is not a new concept for the Territory, the charting of student progress on the scale suggested by profiling is a major change. The major management challenges are: firstly, while profiling must be done by teachers it must also be done in an informed way, with consistency of judgement within and between schools; secondly, the system must maintain the momentum of implementation while not overwhelming practitioners by the pace and requirements of implementation; thirdly, any processes of implementation negotiated with schools should be consistent with the spirit of devolution and local control; fourthly, the system should not lose sight of the concept that profiling is the charting of student achievement along continua of progression with outcomes as reference points; and fifthly, and most importantly, the implementors need to be convinced of the value of an outcomes approach to learning and profiling as a methodology for facilitating further learning.

Distribution of documents

One of the first acts in the introduction of an outcomes approach to education was to distribute sets of the Statements and Profiles for Australian Schools within the NT for familiarisation. Close to 25 000 of these books were distributed to schools, both government and non-government, School Councils, libraries, members of the Board, Schools of Education at the NT University and Batchelor College, ethnic schools and office-based curriculum specialists and advisers. The accompanying memo stated:

> The distribution of the Profiles does not imply that you are expected to implement them straight away or in toto. They are provided so that you can become informed about their content while their use is being considered and coordinated in the NT by the BOS, and you can have input into the decision-making processes associated with professional and curriculum development.
>
> There will be time and scope for engaging in professional interaction with your colleagues, subject experts and school advisory staff but we must be wary of giving any grounds to the accusation that education takes too long to get things done.

The distribution of the documents created mixed reactions among the recipients. Some schools plunged headlong into reviewing their school-based programs in the light of these documents, some teachers became anxious about what they perceived was the task ahead of them, some put them aside hoping that if they waited long enough 'it' would go away, while some others decided to wait until they were directed to use them. In some cases judgement was clouded by the mixed messages they were receiving from various sources. Most Curriculum Corporation information to schools in 1993/94 read as though teachers would work directly with profiles and schools would do their own thing. The place of system-mandated or recommended curriculum which at that stage at least might well have been inconsistent with the profiles in their present form, was not made clear. This was a major problem in the initial stages. Conflicting reports in the media about the use or otherwise of the documents by the other states and territory added to the consternation.

Schools continue to use these documents in various ways, for reviewing and developing school-based programs, writing reports using the language of the profiles, developing reporting proformas, mapping units of work and assessment items. The system does not wish to discourage any such activities.

Professional development and associated issues

Following the distribution of the documents professional development started in earnest. Two profiling officers—a Principal Education Officer and a Senior Education Officer, both of whom had been involved with curriculum development for some time—offered several workshops in the various regional centres of the NT. These were taken up by teachers and office-based staff. The profiling officers travelled far and wide working closely with professional associations, the NT Council of Government School Organisations and some of its regional councils, some school councils, parents and friends groups of schools of the air, most regional councils of principals, and the Australian Education Union. These workshops were aimed at:

- relating national trends to school needs and practices;
- discussing the *Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia,*[3] outcomes-focused curriculum and standards-referenced assessment;
- discussing the purpose of the statements and profiles; the sequencing of level statements and profile outcomes;
- highlighting NTBOS priorities; and
- familiarising participants with the structure and language of the documents.

Through these activities it became clear that it was critical to the implementation of the outcomes profiling that the implementors have adequate time to reflect on what the 'it' meant in terms of philosophy, processes and practicalities. It became obvious that, in order to increase the probability of change occurring in the direction required, it was important to know what attitudes, values and behaviours were acting as barriers or facilitators, and that if too much was expected too soon, especially when attitude or behaviour were involved, the efforts of the profiling officers might not achieve the stated intentions.

For profiling to be successfully implemented, the implementors eventually need to understand the process of change and accept an outcomes approach to learning and all that it entails. They also need to let it permeate all aspects of their work, from planning and programming to evaluating and reviewing their own practices. For this to happen they need to be convinced of the value of an outcomes approach to learning. This continues to be a major challenge, not least because of the differing quality of the nationally developed documents the profiling officers were working with. For example, the participants observed that in some of the documents the progress maps were developmental and described typical developmental sequence in terms of what students could do, whereas in some others the maps were content oriented and described the sequence in which topics might be introduced.

It was evident that many teachers accepted the philosophy of profiling, that is, of charting the progress of a student along a continuum of increasing complexity, as useful. However, the perceived volume of 'extra' work emerged as a concern for classroom practitioners. They could see the benefits of an outcomes approach even though some believed it had the potential to narrow down the curriculum. However, except in the case of English, Mathematics and perhaps Science (through the unifying ideas), many saw the outcomes along a strand organiser (see chapter 1) as somewhat disconnected. The notion of a smooth progression along a path of ever increasing difficulty is attractive for its tidiness but does not reflect the reality of either subject structures or student behaviour.

For this and other reasons, in 1995 the professional development provided by the profiling officers changed from general introductions to profiling to learning area based activities, focusing on English, ESL, Mathematics and Science, and the occasional workshop on the other learning areas. These sessions were run in conjunction with the curriculum specialists and/or the support and advisory staff. Each workshop was organised in two parts, with Part 1 conducted in Semester 1 and Part 2 approximately six months later. The participants were encouraged to undertake small-scale action research at their own workplaces to engage with the process of profiling, to familiarise themselves with the nationally developed documents, to see whether their own students, programs and assessment practices could be recognised in the descriptions provided in the documents as well as to discuss, practice and reflect. Several interesting activities were reported during Part 2 of the workshops.

Curriculum Corporation documents such as *Using the English Profile*,[10] *Using the Science Profile*[11] and *Using the Mathematics Profile*[12] were used as resources at these workshops. Special resource materials produced locally included a professional development package which participants could use in their own work places, illustrative diagrams and charts showing links between the ESL Scales and the English

Profile or placing outcome-based learning and profiling in the teaching–learning cycle.

Teachers commented that activities they found useful were:

- action research with a partner or in small groups;
- annotation of work samples from their own students;
- further developing their own assessment tasks to include more levels and strands;
- developing new pointers indicative of behaviours at particular levels in new contexts;
- examining their own programs in the context of the statements and profiles for Australian schools; and
- developing acceptable responses to the same task to accommodate students working at different levels.

Renewing Teachers' Knowledge project

Another component of professional development was offered to teachers through the 'Renewing Teachers' Knowledge' project. 'Renewing Teachers' Knowledge' was a submission which was successful in receiving funding from the National Professional Development Program (NPDP). The submission was put together and the program developed jointly by the NT Education Department, NT University, Australian Education Union (NT Branch) and various professional associations. The program was offered for the first time in 1995, with about 50 teachers participating, and was offered again in 1996.

For this project, semester length units, special study units, were commissioned on various learning areas consistent with an outcomes approach to learning and the nationally developed documents for the express purpose of renewing teachers' knowledge. Examples of units offered were Working Mathematically, Teaching the Visual Arts, Understanding the Science Statement and Profile, Bio-diversity and Ecologically Sustainable Development. All units except for the core unit—Teaching for Change—were available in distance education mode; the core unit had a week long residential component. Satisfactory completion of the set number of units led to a Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies (Renewing Teachers' Knowledge).

Even though NPDP no longer exists and funding has come to an end, the NT University will continue to deliver the award, and both the core unit and the special study units will be offered as part of that award. The special study units will also be available to students of other courses, e.g. Bachelor of Education, subject to the approval of the relevant course coordinators.

First Steps

1995 also saw the introduction of *First Steps* in NT schools.[11] Developed in WA, *First Steps* is a literacy resource package for primary schools described in developmental continua. It is being introduced in the NT as a resource to assist in the implementation of the NT English curriculum. Initially there was a clouding of the issues because insufficient work was done to align *First Steps* with the nationally developed English Profile. After months of work in various forums to clarify the links in practical terms, the clouds are beginning to lift but manageability of the requirements of both outcomes profiling and *First Steps* continue to cause some concern.

Board's plans for 1995 and associated issues

In order to support the shift in our own curriculum, the NTBOS made two major policy decisions in 1994. Firstly, it decided that a pilot program, involving appropriate professional development and based on English and Mathematics in Years T-7 (and, if possible, Years 8-10 also) should commence in 1995. Secondly, it decided that a general mapping exercise was essential to establish the coverage of areas such as Technology and Health and Physical Education.

The pilot program

In preparation for the pilot program, which was to involve exploratory implementation, a brief was established and distributed to all schools, inviting them to register interest in being a pilot school. All schools which registered interest were then invited to attend an information session on the expectations of the pilot program in terms of time and other aspects and to discuss their expectations of the program. These sessions were run at various regional centres over a period of time before a second round of applications was invited; this time the invitation required schools to make a firm commitment about their interest in being a pilot school. Most of the schools that applied in the first round applied again. Eventually 13 schools were selected as pilot schools; five schools piloted English, two schools piloted the ESL Scales and six schools piloted Mathematics (though not all strands were involved.)

The Pilot Program Handbook set out a model and process for piloting which outlined the non-negotiable aspects of the program (the system's needs) and options (the school's needs). Options included: special foci, beyond the system's requirements for the pilot, on assessment; collecting and recording information; continuity and articulation in schooling; parent involvement; programming and delivery; reporting student progress and achievement; school organisation and decision making, and; using computer software.

Schools were invited to play a major part in shaping how the program operated at individual school level. Not all schools chose a special focus; of those which did, most did not have the time to follow it to the level originally intended. The most commonly chosen options were assessment, collecting and recording information, reporting student progress and achievement and using software. For each of these and the non-negotiable aspects of the pilot, the suggested starting point was a review of the school's existing policies and practices and an examination of how profiling fitted in with what was already happening in the school.

The pilot schools were provided with funding for time release for profiling administration as well as for school-based professional development, group discussions, moderation type activities and so on. Funding was also provided for purchasing resources and for some administrative costs.

The purpose of the pilot program was to gather data which would assist the Board of Studies in developing policy regarding the introduction of profiling and the use of the profiles for Australian schools in NT schools, and which would contribute to the national debate. Four goals and associated outcomes and performance indicators were identified. The goals were: firstly, to obtain reliable information on the processes of profiling and the use of profiles from which conclusions/generalisations could be drawn; secondly, to identify issues and possible solutions regarding all aspects of the processes of profiling; thirdly, to increase the expertise and proficiency of the participating schools in profiles and profiling and its national context; and fourthly, to increase awareness of students, parents and the wider community of profiling and its implications.

The piloting involved schools teaching the NT English or Mathematics curriculum but using the assessment information to profile students on the nationally developed English Profile, ESL Scales or Mathematics Profile. The general view was that there was a high degree of correspondence between the outcomes identified in the NT documents and the nationally developed profiles, even though there were differences in their structure. For example, the nationally developed English Profile is described through the modes of 'Listening and Speaking', 'Reading and Viewing', and 'Writing', whereas the NT English curriculum is developed through the strands Learning to use English, Learning about English, and Learning through English, and Texts. One of the implicit goals of the piloting process was to ascertain how easy or difficult it was to make the connections between the NT curriculum and the nationally developed profiles.

The pace of the program was monitored through the profiling plan each school had formulated, consistent with the goals of the pilot program, for its particular needs and context—through centrally provided response sheets, as well as through visits to schools and other contacts with the senior teachers, coordinators and key teachers.

An Operations Committee overviewed the progress of the pilot program. It met on a regular basis to receive reports, examine the implications of the responses to the response sheets, consider recommendations from schools and the profiling officers, and generally to provide support and guidance to the profiling program.

Informal interaction with pilot teachers during the initial stages of the program indicated that they were beginning to:

- gain new insights into how children think and learn;
- appreciate the developmental dimensions and contexts of the continua of

progression and what they should look for as evidence of change in their students in the future;

- appreciate that for students to progress they should be provided with opportunities to do so;
- make notes with a specific focus, as they interacted with their students, about the concepts and processes they needed to re-visit or were missing from their programs;
- appreciate the broader nature of profiling, that is the building up of a picture over a period of time, as against the narrower aspects of testing; and
- appreciate the need for 'triangulation' of evidence as against a 'one-shot' picture.

However, as one pilot school reported, some people needed to:

- be prepared to take risks and accept change (a commonly heard comment was *'We're doing a good job now, why change anything?'*);
- recognise the need to become more accountable in achieving the outcomes;
- see and believe in the value of long term profiling; and
- believe that the extra time is worthwhile educationally.

The first of the formal collections of evaluative data was through a response sheet, towards the end of Semester 1, which required the pilot teachers to answer questions about the usefulness, clarity, accuracy and reliability of each of the elements (Level Statements, Outcomes, Pointers and Work Samples, as applicable—see chapter 1) of the nationally developed English and Mathematics Profiles and the ESL Scales. The response sheet also included questions on the layout of the profiles, the design features and so on.

Some evaluative comments made were:

> Parents aren't interested in this kind of information; they won't understand; what we already tell them is adequate.
>
> Differences between levels and expectations in some leaning areas for the same level are inconsistent.
>
> Convoluted language; difficult to read.
>
> Outcome statements are useful only when the pointers are well grasped.
>
> Pointers help confirm classroom practice.
>
> The level statements, outcome statements, pointers and work samples together give you something tangible to moderate student work against.
>
> Nuisance to be handling several documents (nationally developed and NT documents); profiles should relate directly to the NT curriculum and even be in the same document.

> A little daunting initially, usage may take away initial trepidation; organisation is different from that of our curriculum.

A second response sheet, independent of the first one, was sent to pilot schools in Semester 2. The second response sheet required the pilot teachers to place each of their students at a level and then provide data on the distribution of the levels within their respective classes. The teachers were reassured that their decisions at that time would only be considered, at best, an educated guess. This requirement provided the impetus for many teachers to work together discussing and comparing their understanding and interpretations of the standards (that is, the outcome statements). In primary schools, in particular, unit meetings (for example, early childhood, middle primary) became a regular feature. Many pilot teachers commented that the requirement to complete this response sheet enabled them to experience what profiling was about, more than any other aspect of the program. Many were not prepared to assign a level to a student. They would have liked gradations of levels such as Level 2+, Level 2++ and so on, which was perhaps because of the uncertainty they were experiencing at that time, or perhaps because students were exhibiting behaviour inconsistent with the descriptions in the profiles or were working across several levels and strands, as one would expect.

For the pilot program a three-point scale was suggested for recording student progress—beginning, consolidating and achieving—and it was the 'achieving' level which was required for the second response sheet.

Some comments were:

> Using profiles and placing students is the most effective means of becoming familiar with outcomes and appropriate levels.
>
> It is too subjective – how can we be sure everyone will interpret the levels the same way?
>
> Curriculum overlaid with profiles would simplify the process.
>
> It has made me more aware of problems and issues associated with assessment.
>
> I found I was already collecting about the right amount of assessment data.

An interim evaluation and seminar for the coordinators and key teachers of the pilot schools towards the end of 1995 provided the following reactions:

- Profiling involves a great deal of work for teachers, at least in the initial stages; over time, as familiarity with the outcomes increases and teachers internalise the developmental sequences from level to level, preparation time may reduce; the work involved in assessment and record keeping will continue, but may be facilitated by appropriate systems and software;

- Making links between NT curriculum documents and Australian Profiles is very time consuming (more so in Mathematics than in English); ways must be found to align them more closely;

- Focused work in one learning area, English or Mathematics, is providing teachers with the opportunity to increase their understanding of the 'field', and of assessment, programming and pedagogical issues. A superficial approach to all eight areas is not likely to produce the kind of changes profiling has the potential to bring about;

- A paradigm shift of this nature takes a long time and a lot of effort;

- The time involved in the change process needs to be recognised by teachers, schools and systems and planned for appropriately;

- Implementation guidelines and timelines must be sufficiently flexible to allow schools to accommodate these within their own planning processes;

- Widespread professional development is essential, particularly in strategic planning for assessment and use of computer software for recording data and generating reports;

- Collaborative approaches within and among schools are essential if consistency of judgement is to be achieved;

- Successful implementation requires a whole school approach involving senior staff and key teachers;

- Any more than 40 outcomes per level will be unmanageable for primary schools for profiling in a meaningful way; and

- In awarding a 'level' to a student, some pilot teachers built up a picture of that student by aggregating the performance information relating to outcomes and, in some cases, the pointers; others developed a broad overview of a student's level over a period of time and then validated that against the profile levels. The former approach was found to be more labour-intensive and fragmented than the latter. The latter approach was also felt to be more in line with the spirit of profiling.

The volume of work involved, data to be collated and the language of the profiles were concerns for many. Some comments were:

> It took me an hour to profile one student. People don't have this much time. The most time consuming task is flicking between levels looking at outcomes, pointers and work samples and rechecking to see what terms mean.
>
> The profile is jargon laden and the language needs modifying. It also needs a more simplified structure.
>
> It will be difficult to profile in all learning areas ...

However, some others felt that:

> Profiling is definitely helping with report writing ... As I am progressing, I am finding it easier.
>
> I'm using pointers intuitively as a measure now when I observe children.

> I find I am talking (to students) about the purpose of different writing styles, how and why they are set out like they are and what the audience needs the information for.

Many felt that they needed support in assessing and judging 'levelness' holistically—in 'Working mathematically', for example. Some schools commenced innovative ways of helping themselves, including professional development and the use of specially designed extended mathematical tasks which were inclusive of Working Mathematically and other strands. At the system level a moderation workshop was conducted to support teacher judgement in Mathematics. Several samples of student work were annotated, identifying the characteristics which made them examples of achievement of particular outcomes. This brought home to teachers that a piece of work could demonstrate the achievement of one outcome (from the 'Number' strand, for example) at one level and another outcome (from the 'Working mathematically' strand, for example) at a different level. The annotated work samples were published and the document, *Children Working Mathematically and Teachers Making Judgements,*[14] distributed to pilot schools.

Another aspect of the pilot program was to ascertain the usefulness of the 1995 data being passed on to teachers for 1996. For this reason, the pilot program was extended to Term 1, 1996. Instructions to pilot schools in February 1996 were as follows:

> The memo dated 2 Nov. 1995 stated that the primary purpose for extending the pilot program was to examine the kind of profiling information that is passed on and how such information is used by teachers who received it, as they continued to profile the students.
>
> The first step in this process is to pass on the profiling information from last year to this year's teachers. Some schools have already done this. Others are encouraged to do so as soon as possible.
>
> The second step is to validate this information in the context of this year's work. The teachers might find that some students are working at the level awarded to them at the end of last year, while some are working at a higher level and some others appear to have regressed. The changes, if any, need to be identified and recorded as part of the piloting process this term. Where changes in student achievement levels have been identified, it might be an idea for the teachers concerned to get together and discuss the situation. It might assist them in developing insights into some of the issues to do with profiling.[15]

This aspect of the pilot program could not be followed up in any systematic manner due to industrial action. However, some information was evident in the draft case studies we were beginning to receive. In this context, one school which decided to pass on summary assessment information rather than the folio of significant work samples reported:

> The summaries were not as much value as the originals (i.e. work samples). Originals need to be passed on to new teachers to give a complete picture. [The] summary was found useful to flag major differences in levels only.
>
> The majority of staff used their own methods of assessment and then used the profiles to confirm the placements of students. There were a few exceptions: 'I

> was able to have a quick overview of my class. In one quick glance I could mentally group my class into three ability groups. With this information I was able to protect those students who were working at lower levels and channel extension activities toward those who were working at higher levels. With the mathematics profile summaries I was able to nurture the former group without publicly exposing their mathematical inadequacies.'

The pilot program was wound up at the end of Term 1, 1996. The final evaluation was rather limited due to industrial action. Case studies are being finalised by the profiling officers.

Work bans

Towards the end of 1995, profiling was placed firmly on the work-ban list by the Australian Education Union (NT) as part of its industrial action to seek improved working conditions and this had an adverse effect on participation. The workshops planned for 1996, the third year of the profiling program, aimed to assist schools with the uptake of profiling and were to be school-based after the introductory session. The effect of the work bans was that few individuals participated; however, subsequently some of these individuals took up leadership roles in organising school-based development, thus providing their schools a head start in the formal implementation of profiling.

Professional development support overall

A review of the concentrated activities in professional development over 1994-1996 showed that about 75 per cent of NT schools had received some professional development on outcomes-based learning and profiling. The other 25 per cent of schools were mainly small, remote non-urban schools. They are being reached through small schools conferences, cluster school activities and visiting curriculum and cross-curriculum support and advisory staff.

From piloting to implementation

The pilot program suggested that profiling was useful and achievable. The pilot schools made recommendations and helped develop various models for implementation. Pilot teachers provided informed and considered feedback in the context of English, ESL and Mathematics; about the strengths and weaknesses of the nationally developed documents; issues to do with making connections between the NT curricula and the nationally developed documents; and their own experiences of profiling. They recommended that the links between the curriculum and profiling instrument(s), that is, any schemata used for monitoring student progress, be made clear and obvious and that the number of outcomes be made manageable, if outcomes profiling were to be successfully implemented. Other recommendations from the pilot schools are listed in the section on the pilot program earlier in the chapter. As curriculum is central to profiling, recommendations to the Board included changes to existing curriculum documents and the development of NT Outcomes Profiles. The indicative timeline recommended to the Board took into account recommendations from the pilot schools.

Indicative timeline for implementation

The indicative timeline approved by the Board is as follows:

Primary schools	1996-97	Pilot mode
	1998	English/ESL **or** Mathematics
	1999	English/ESL **and** Mathematics
	2000	At least **three** learning areas including: English/ESL and Mathematics
	2001	At least **four** learning areas including: English/ESL and Mathematics
	2002	Students will be profiled in **all** eight areas
Secondary	1996-97	Pilot mode
	1998	four learning areas including: English/ESL, Mathematics and Science
	1999	All teachers will profile students in **at least one** learning area
	2000	Students will be profiled in **all** eight areas

A feature of the lead-in to formal implementation is the pilot mode. The NT Outcomes Profiles will be used and refined during the pilot mode. The following extract referring to the pilot mode is from an information paper distributed to schools in February, 1996.

> In keeping with the spirit of devolution, schools must make their own decisions about the best way to pilot. At the very least, though, it will be necessary for schools to check their English/ESL and/or mathematics school programs and assessment strategies and their record keeping and reporting practices to ensure that these are consistent with an outcomes approach to education and the requirements of profiling. Training and advice on these matters, and on the use of technology to facilitate the process, will be provided.
>
> It is recommended that, commencing in Semester 2 1996, each teacher chooses a small number of students, say five students, and starts the process of profiling them on one strand in English/ESL or mathematics. (In High Schools profiling may also be done for Science and another learning area). This will enable teachers to check their own programs, assessment strategies, and record keeping and reporting practices for consistency with the requirements of profiling. In Semester 1 of 1997 this can be extended to two or more strands.

A support plan has been firmed up based on the responses to an NTBOS survey to gauge needs of schools. The plan identifies the outcomes to be achieved between now and 1998, how officers at different levels of the NTDE can contribute to the management of change and the timeline for and nature of support which will be available.

Curriculum mapping, review and redevelopment

When the NT curriculum documents were mapped against the nationally developed statements and profiles, it became clear very quickly that the structure of the NT curriculum did not fit neatly into the structure of the nationally developed documents and vice versa. For example, as mentioned earlier, the strands of the NT English curriculum are Learning to use English, Learning about English, Learning through English and Texts, whereas the English Statement is described through Text and Language, and the English Profile through the modes of 'Listening and Speaking', 'Reading and Viewing' and 'Writing'. The diagram in Figure 4.2 below shows the scope of the NT English curriculum.

Studies of Society and Environment provides another example. The NT curriculum in this area is built on four strands—Investigation, Communication and Participation, Democratic Processes, Ecological Sustainability and Social Justice. That is, the process strand is the same as that of the nationally developed Studies of Society and Environment Profile; however, the other strands are based on the values identified in the nationally developed Studies of Society and Environment Statement and not, as is the case with the nationally developed profile, on the traditional disciplines of History, Geography, and so on.

Dance is a strand of the nationally developed Arts Profile; however, in the NT, Dance is part of both the Arts and the PE and Health curriculum for primary schools and the Arts curriculum for high schools. Similarly 'Media', a strand of the nationally developed Arts Profile, has implications for each of English, the Arts and Technology in the NT.

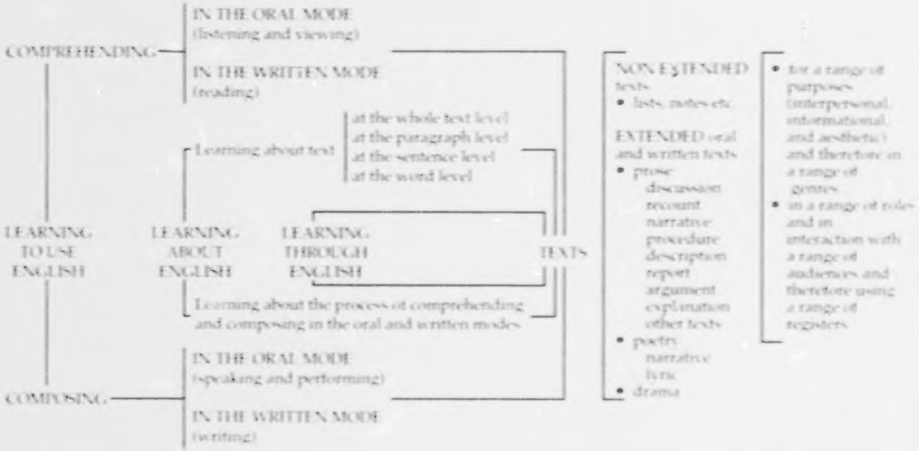
IN THE ORAL MODE
(listening and viewing)
COMPREHENDING
IN THE WRITTEN MODE
(reading)
Learning about text
at the whole text level
at the paragraph level
at the sentence level
at the word level
LEARNING TO USE ENGLISH
LEARNING ABOUT ENGLISH
LEARNING THROUGH ENGLISH
TEXTS
Learning about the process of comprehending and composing in the oral and written modes
IN THE ORAL MODE
(speaking and performing)
COMPOSING
IN THE WRITTEN MODE
(writing)
NON EXTENDED texts
• lists, notes etc
EXTENDED oral and written texts
• prose
discussion
recount
narrative
procedure
description
report
argument
explanation
other texts
• poetry
narrative
lyric
• drama
• for a range of purposes (interpersonal, informational, and aesthetic) and therefore in a range of genres
• in a range of roles and in interaction with a range of audiences and therefore using a range of registers

Figure 4.2 Structure of the Northern Territory English Curriculum

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One of the problems with mapping was the fact that the NT curricula in most subjects made limited use of outcome terms. This made comparisons difficult, if not impossible in some cases.

This exercise revealed that most of the process strands in the nationally developed profiles have common elements even though the contexts are different. Some strands such as 'Materials' in Technology, 'Natural and processed materials' in Science and 'Resources' in Studies of Society and Environment, though similar in some ways, are developed through different process strands and have different destinations. All profiles are steeped in information and communication skills. Some outcome statements and activities suggested by pointers appear to be similar; however, the similarities are rather superficial, as the intent and end points are quite different. Content-based outcomes which feature in several of the nationally developed profiles appear to be inconsistent with the spirit of 'progression along a continuum of increasing complexity', a concept which underlies profiling.

Questions were raised regarding the following:

- the desirability of an integrated Board Approved Course of Study for the early childhood years;
- the desirability of Technology as a learning area for primary schools;
- the probability of meeting the requirements, as expected of Level 6, of each of the national profiles within the suggested time allocation for the various learning areas;
- the feasibility of integrated approaches without compromising the integrity of the learning areas included in such an approach;
- the issue of 'progression along a continuum of increasing complexity' and the desirability of developing it in the NT Profiles;
- the usefulness of the structure and contents of the nationally developed profiles for students with special needs; and
- the place of the ESL Band Scales, developed by the National Language and Literacy Institute of Australia, in the context of the ESL Scales.

Some of these issues continue to be debated.

Other aspects of the Board's policy which continue to have an effect in the area of curriculum development are the decision that the NT curriculum should encompass everything, but not only everything, that is implied in the Profiles and that the implementation of the NT Outcomes Profiles should be achieved with minimum disruption to existing curriculum development and school programs, and should be recognised as a developmental process. These decisions allow the NT curriculum to be broader than what is implied by the profiles, set the scene for curriculum mapping, and allow for the continued development of the curriculum documents which were already in various stages of development.

Broadening the curriculum can have the effect of increasing the number of outcomes. Therefore the advice to the developers of NT Outcomes Profiles was that outcomes be developed at the strand level (see chapter 1). This has had the effect of reducing the number of outcomes to around 40 per level, across the eight key learning areas, for reporting purposes and accommodating any broader curriculum intentions.

The Board's endorsement of the indicative timeline for the formal implementation of profiling in NT schools helped bring curriculum development to the fore. The second half of 1996 was devoted to the development of the NT Outcomes Profiles.

NT Outcomes Profiles

The first consultative draft of the NT Outcomes Profiles was published and distributed to schools in January 1997 as a working document. The NT Outcomes Profiles are different from the nationally developed versions in the following respects.

First, as stated above, there is only one outcome statement per strand per level. Each statement is therefore more holistic than that in the nationally developed versions.

Second, each outcome profile provides a description of what each strand is about so that the progression described along each learning continuum is clear.

Third, information is provided to assist teachers make judgements about students' achievement of outcomes. The difference is that in some NT Outcomes Profiles this information is provided in the form of elaborations of the outcome statements strand by strand (e.g. Mathematics).

In this scheme of things, the nationally developed profiles are seen as resources to support the implementation of the NT Outcomes Profiles. The NT Outcomes Profiles maintain the nationally agreed standards and make explicit the links with the nationally developed profiles.

The strands and levels are identical with the nationally developed profiles in all learning areas except in Studies of Society and Environment, where the strand 'Resources' is replaced with 'Indigenous Perspectives' in the NT Outcomes Profile. 'Resources' has been woven into the other strands.

Since the eight NT Profiles being developed are to be consistent with the eight levels in the corresponding nationally developed documents, these levels will not describe adequately the learning or developmental continua and outcomes for students with learning disabilities and the progress they do make could go unrecognised. The pointers identified in the nationally developed documents to show progress 'Towards Level 1' by students with disabilities are also deemed to be unsatisfactory in this regard.

For this reason, Profiles for Students with Additional Needs are being developed in the NT in seven of the eight learning areas, the exception being Languages. There are no plans to develop Foundation or Lifeskill Outcomes Profiles in the area of Languages. When completed these will consist of:

- a set of seven Foundation Outcomes Profiles developed across three levels to monitor and report on learning outcomes for students of primary school age who are enrolled in our schools and who, because of significant learning difficulties, are not achieving outcomes at Level 1; and
- a set of seven Lifeskill Outcomes Profiles for students who are achieving at Foundation levels or lower levels of learning area outcomes profiles as they advance into upper primary and secondary schooling.

These profiles will complement the NT Profiles. They will ensure that the learning outcomes are realistic, relevant and age appropriate and that they will prepare students for community adjustment and post school options.

The NT has also developed an outcomes profile for students with English as a Second Language. As with other NT Outcomes Profiles, the levels are consistent with the levels in the nationally developed ESL Scales.[14] It is also informed by the Band Scales[15] developed by the National Language and Literacy Institute of Australia.

In the NT ESL Outcomes Profile the Oral Interaction strand is separated into two strands: 'Listening' and 'Speaking'. These two strands will also have beginning levels prior to Level 1 to cater particularly for students for whom English is not the community language and its use is largely limited to the school domain.

Major priorities have been: firstly, to make the profile inclusive of ESL learners in non-urban communities with a predominantly Aboriginal population; and, secondly, to ensure that the document is easy for non-specialists to understand. The English as a Second Language Outcomes Profile should be a useful focus for dialogue between ESL support teachers and classroom teachers, and between teachers and parents and caregivers.

Now that the elements of the NT Outcomes Profiles have been established, the scene has been set for a cross-curriculum mapping of the learning areas, cross-curricular subjects and principles to occur. This will enable any overlap to be recognised, the levelness of 'common' skills, processes and understandings across learning areas to be compared and justified and compliance with Board's policies examined. At this stage there are no plans to relate key competencies to the development of the NT curriculum to Year 10.

The next stage in curriculum redevelopment will be the conceptualisation and development of Learning Area Statements, one for each of the eight key areas of learning. It is planned that the NT Outcomes Profiles will become part of the Learning Area Statements.

In the long term, we should be aiming at a complete match between curriculum and profiles. This means that the curriculum will provide opportunities to develop the understandings, skills and knowledge identified in the profiles and to demonstrate their achievement. At the same time the limitations of profiling should not dictate the curriculum. The outcomes of the curriculum should be the Profile. Teachers already feel that they have to cope with too much different, and sometimes inconsistent, advice or instruction about what they should be teaching—adding to the heap is unlikely to solve the problem. Genuine curriculum reform is, however, a lengthy process and one which must take the practitioners along with it if it is to have any lasting result. There is a real danger that pressures on teachers that they should be seen to be implementing today's agenda will lead to superficial change which, ultimately, will be of little benefit.

The progressive and cumulative nature of profiling makes two conditions imperative for its success. Firstly, the curriculum must be stable, have predictability and be inclusive of all students as well as having future currency. 'Future currency' was one of the issues the writers of the nationally developed documents had to contend with and this is currently an issue also for the curriculum specialists in the NT.

Secondly, student achievement information must be collected, entered, stored, accessed, transmitted and probably transformed from one framework to another (for example, from that of *First Steps* to that of the English Profile), preferably electronically, over a period of time. Many pilot schools are keen that the profiling process does not break down at the primary–secondary interface.

Management of student achievement information

Undoubtedly one of the critical contributory factors to the success or otherwise of the profiling enterprise will be the management of student achievement data. Provision of a suitable computer application(s) is critical to the effective and efficient implementation and management of profiling. Two software programs were trialed as part of the pilot program. These were KIDMAP™ and Chancery Software™. The latter is a Macintosh based computer application, based on the national profiles, developed in NSW primarily for recording student achievement information. Each of these programs has its particular strengths and weaknesses. What had emerged from the trials was that some of the considerations in the selection or development of computer software to support outcomes profiling must be:

- user friendliness;
- cost of the software licence, hardware, system maintenance and training;
- compatibility with software and hardware systems for administration purposes;
- assistance the program provides to teachers with their planning and programming;
- ability to generate reports from the assessment data entered;
- ability to be customised for local needs, and the associated costs of this;
- ability to accommodate other outcomes-based frameworks and translate them to a preferred framework; and
- whether for a system-wide platform or stand alone computer.

Another software program, Student Profiles Database,[26] which is designed to make the nationally developed statements and profiles easily accessible to teachers, is being favourably received by curriculum officers as well as teachers. This program, developed by a company of the same name, is available in either Macintosh or Windows versions. It enables teachers to plan integrated programs by identifying concepts, skills and understandings common to a number of learning areas, and their contexts and levels. Schools are encouraged to purchase this program.

The decision following the piloting of KIDMAP and Chancery has been to develop a program locally. The administrative computer application currently being used in NT schools is the Computer Based Administrative System for Schools (CBASS).[27] The operating system—converging technology operating systems (CTOS)—allows multi-user, multi-processing and both local area and wider area networking facilities. There are plans to increase the operating system's functionality and compatibility with other operating systems. Profiling requirements are part of this plan.

A profiling recording module is currently being developed at the Board of Studies Services Division. This module will be linked to the school administrative system so that student data can be easily accessed by schools when using the module and achievement data can be transmitted to a central point, if required. The next phase will see the development of a reporting module linked to the recording module.

Implications for system-wide assessment

The elements of the assessment program at three points during the compulsory years of schooling are system-wide testing and moderation of particular components of school assessment.

The Multilevel Assessment Program

In 1984 a system-wide assessment program, known as the Multilevel Assessment Program, was introduced for urban primary schools. Its aim was to assess the performance of students of Years 5 and 7 on the Mathematics and English core curricula. Materials for English comprised a package covering three assessment approaches, namely Type A: item pools; Type B: moderation of students' writing; and Type C: strategies for assessing reading. In Mathematics, only Type A: (item pools) were used.

During the years 1984–1987, a sampling matrix was employed for administration of tests and collection of test data and the information from each school was kept confidential. In 1986 a testing program was introduced in Aboriginal schools. Students from Year 5 to post primary whom the school considered to be working at the appropriate stages were given the same set of tests.

Since 1988, however, the focus of the assessment program has gradually shifted from assessment of performance based on the core objectives and minimum competencies to assessment of performance based on the whole curriculum. In 1988, the WA Primary Mathematics Curriculum was adopted for use in NT primary schools. This curriculum was clearly pegged on developmental stages at seven levels. This was the beginning in the NT of placing student performance on a developmental continuum. Since 1988 the Board Approved Courses of Study for English (T - 10) and Mathematics (8 - 10) have also been described in stages. With the advent of nationally developed Statements and Profiles, 'Bands' and 'Levels' are being used in designing the curriculum.

Multilevel tests in both Reading and Mathematics were introduced first in non-urban schools in 1991 and in urban schools in 1994 to cater for the wide range of student attainment. The initial marking is done by the teachers themselves. The marks are then randomly checked centrally and the results are analysed using Item Response Theory for the school cohort and the territory cohort as a whole. This information is then passed on to the schools concerned.

It is envisaged that from 1997 the tests for both the urban and non-urban programs will be representative of the levels of the NT English and Mathematics Outcomes Profiles.

Moderation of student writing is carried out annually in a sample of primary schools as part of the NT Multilevel Assessment Program in English. Several publications based on the NT curriculum have been produced to support teacher development in assessment techniques, particularly the marking of writing and investigations in Mathematics.[22] Future editions of some of these documents and other aspects of moderation will be aligned with the standards identified in the NT English Outcomes Profile.

The Year 10 assessment program

Visitation and consensus moderation of school-based assessment of student work have been features of Year 10 English and Mathematics assessment in the NT since 1983. Most high schools practise internal school-based moderation prior to the group consensus moderation at a central location in English and Mathematics. An important component of mathematics moderation is an Extended Mathematical Task which encompasses problem solving, problem posing, mathematical investigation, mathematical modelling and a substantial mathematical content, all of which are aspects of 'Working mathematically'. Moderation also occurs in some components of Year 10 Science and Social Education. These practices will continue and become more oriented towards the NT Outcomes Profiles.

The Year 10 territory-wide assessment program in English and Mathematics commenced in 1989. The English common instrument of assessment (CIA) has two components which allow students to demonstrate their ability to comprehend and compose everyday texts and literature, while the Mathematics CIA is a written test drawn directly from the NT Mathematics curriculum. In Mathematics, three common instruments of assessment at different levels of difficulty are produced and administered to Year 10 students, as appropriate. The results of these instruments partly contribute to the students' exit scores.

Consistent with the philosophy of starting from current practices in mainstreaming outcomes-based learning, a group of experienced practising teachers mapped the 1995 Year 10 CIAs against the profile levels. Each CIA item was analysed by level and by strand. A report in the *Curriculum and Assessment Newsletter* (May, 1996) states:

> As was expected with assessment instruments such as CIAs, the number of tasks that could be meaningfully mapped to a level in the Working Mathematically strand was minimal; the learning outcomes and pointers in this strand are more relevant to investigative and more general problem solving tasks, rather than to tasks set for an external test which are tied closely to the content of the curriculum.
>
> The results of the mapping exercise showed that, to a very large degree, the types of tasks we ask of students at the three different levels in Year 10 mathematics are consistent with what has been documented in the Mathematics Profile.[23]

Some anomalies between the CIAs and the Profile were identified. An example is that the use of index notation and the application of index laws ('Number' strand) and a number of the entries in the 'Algebra' strand are located in profile levels about one level higher than acceptable in terms of the NT curriculum.

This mapping was the first step towards analysing student performance against profile levels. It is planned to have the Year 10 CIAs aligned with the NT Mathematics Profile by 1997.

In summary, we have an assessment program which has been evolving since 1983 by being responsive to review and redevelopment. It is empowering practitioners to get to the heart of appropriate assessment practices which are valid and equitable. No doubt further adjustments will be required to meet the requirements of profiling.

Collaborative activities with other systems and contributions to the national debate and database

Curriculum Corporation Project: 'Materials to support primary teachers in using the profiles'

One of the profiling officers was a member of the National Reference Group for the Curriculum Corporation project—*Materials to support primary teachers in using the profiles*—which was designed to demonstrate how the use of the nationally developed statements and profiles could assist teachers with their programming and assessment. The project involved the production of a coordinated series of units of work based on an integrated curriculum approach to teaching and learning. Outcomes from the nationally developed profiles were used as the proposed learning outcomes for these units and were the focus for assessment.

Members of the Reference Group were required to provide critical feedback to draft materials and occasionally to organise trialing of some draft units. When possible, comment was also sought from others within the system such as individual classroom teachers, advisory and curriculum officers. An integrated approach to teaching and learning has been a recommended strategy for primary schools for some time within the NT, particularly in the area of early childhood.

There are, however, some concerns about the viability of using the generic outcomes for programming at this level. In programming for units of work of the kind provided in this resource, primary schools are being advised to use outcomes from the NT curriculum which could realistically be achieved in a two to six week period. In the long term such programs may contribute to the achievement of the NT Profile outcomes.

Joint NPDP project: 'Strengthening the Early Years: Improving Outcomes'

Strengthening the Early Years: Improving Outcomes is an NPDP project designed for early childhood educators being developed by a consortium of early childhood educators from Western Australia, the Northern Territory, the ACT and Tasmania. The end product of this project will be a professional development resource document with a focus on early childhood education.

This resource is designed to facilitate the use of key competencies and the nationally developed statements and profiles in preschools and the first four years of school. It has a flexible structure so that it may be used by either individuals or groups. It is designed to enable early childhood teachers to renew their knowledge of child development and learning and to reflect on their practice through reading, conducting investigations and undertaking action research.

The NT has been involved in this work since 1994, initially through responding to draft materials, making additional suggestions and providing the information for the 'customised' NT version. In 1996 territory personnel were involved in writing some of the materials.

A two year project was established in 1996 to trial and review the draft resource document through professional development and feedback; two project officers with particular responsibility for the carriage of the project were appointed in the northern and southern regions. They continue to promote and support the use of this document in NT schools while also assisting with its review and editing. The final version of the document will be available for purchase in the near future.

Key competencies

A Senior Education Officer was appointed from July 1994 to December 1995 to conceptualise and manage the introduction of Mayer key competencies[24] in the NT. Some NT schools became part of the South Australian Pilot Program and contributed to the national database. The NT continues to participate in the Key Competencies Interactive Multimedia Professional Development package: Examples Database[25] to produce illustrative exemplars of the key competencies on the CD-ROM.

NT Stage 1 (Year 11) courses were mapped to identify the opportunity they provided for developing the Key Competencies to particular levels of competence (Levels 1 to 3, the same as the Mayer levels). All Stage 1 courses accredited since 1995 contain a table which presents this information. The NT has no policy at this stage regarding the assessment and reporting of these competencies, hence they do not feature in the Senior Secondary Studies Certificate issued by the Board of Studies. Schools may report such information at their discretion. The work done in this area is not directly related to the NT's work with the Profiles.

Conclusion

In recent times the NT Department of Education has declared Outcomes Profiling a policy and priority for the system. A timeline and action plan for NTDE to support the Board's indicative timeline have been endorsed by the Senior Executive Group of NTDE. A Monitoring Committee, representative of all divisions of NTDE, is being set up to overview the uptake of outcomes profiling in this the piloting year for all schools and to gauge their preparedness for the formal implementation beginning in 1998.

In general terms, the NT Board of Studies perceives an outcomes approach to learning as an opportunity to work towards achieving a closer match between the intended, implemented and achieved curriculum than is currently the case, thereby improving the learning outcomes for all students. The Board is committed to the mainstreaming of profiling in NT schools. This process has only just begun. The challenge is to ensure that the curriculum and associated activities add an essential dimension of reality, so that profiling is not seen as a sterile exercise, irrelevant to the teachers' real work.

[1] Northern Territory Board of Studies, The Common Curriculum Statement, Author, Darwin, 1992.

[2] Australian Education Council, *Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia*, Author, Melbourne, 1989.

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5 Focusing on Learning in New South Wales

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Overview

Education authorities in New South Wales have long been committed to shifting the focus of educational endeavour from consideration of the kind of schooling we provide towards a better understanding of the educational outcomes we might expect of the young people in our schools. The New South Wales Education Reform Act (1990) provided a catalyst for initiatives both at an individual school and school system level. In more recent times a different approach has been adopted arising out of the work to develop and support the national Statements and Profiles.

In 1995, the New South Wales Government undertook a major review of progress towards implementing an outcomes and profiles approach in schools across the state. This Review,[1] chaired by Ken Eltis, is the focus of much of this paper. The paper outlines the developments leading up to the 'Eltis' Review and how these initiatives have impacted at the school level. It outlines the Review's major findings, subsequent directions and progress towards implementation of the Review's recommendations.

Outcomes and the NSW Education Reform Act (1990)

The first formal impetus within New South Wales for an outcomes-based approach came from the Education Reform Act, 1990.[2] Section 14. (3) of the Act stated that:

> Any syllabus developed or endorsed by the Board for a particular course of study is to indicate the aims, objectives and desired outcomes in terms of knowledge and skills that should be acquired by children at the various levels of achievement by the end of specified stages in the course ...

As a consequence, in 1991 the New South Wales Board of Studies began to develop statements of outcomes for each of its syllabuses across Years K-12. How the Board went about this task and the response of schools is documented in the next section.

Implementation over the period 1990-1993

Faced with the task of implementing the spirit of the Education Reform Act, the Board set about clarifying its understanding of outcomes and the ways in which they might be applied in schools. Subsequently, the Board of Studies released a statement on *Curriculum Outcomes* in 1991, which noted that syllabus outcomes:

> were not meant to be in the form of an exhaustive behavioural list. They could be viewed as being on a continuum between the very general aims of core

> knowledge, skills and attitudes in the syllabus to the much more detailed and specific outcomes expected from classroom activity.[3]

The Board of Studies explained the rationale for its approach to outcomes in the following terms:

> Outcomes can assist teachers by:
>
> - inviting focus upon the product as well as the process of teaching
> - providing specific guidance for planning the learning environment, programming learning activities, selecting appropriate teaching resources, and evaluating courses
> - providing a focus for assessment
> - defining the content level of the syllabus more precisely
> - assisting in determining student needs whether it be for consolidation, extension activities, remediation, or progress to another stage
> - clarifying the type of student achievement to be assessed by helping teachers make realistic decisions about appropriate knowledge, skills and values for students in each stage
> - providing concrete means of establishing whether or not an objective has been achieved
> - assisting reporting of student achievement
> - providing students with a clear perception of goals to be achieved
> - giving parents, employers and the wider community a clearer understanding of the instructional intent and likely achievements of students.[4]

It is worth noting that the Board's paper made it quite explicit that it did not see outcomes as providing an indication of linear progression in learning. The Board also mentioned that the outcomes would allow for different qualities of achievement.

The Board proceeded on this basis over the period from 1990-93 to develop outcomes arranged in stages of schooling as required by the Act. The Board defined six stages based on the schooling Years K-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12. The sets of outcomes developed were broad indicators of the learning expectations arising from the syllabus, as indicated, for example, by the definition of outcomes given in the Draft K-6 Syllabus and Support Document for Personal Development, Health and Physical Education released at that time:

> a set of broad comprehensible, assessable and observable indicators and benchmarks of student achievement at each stage of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. Taken together they cover the range of knowledge and understandings, skills, values and attitudes of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education syllabus.[5]

Furthermore the draft syllabus stated that outcomes would:

- provide teachers with a foundation for programming and selecting learning experiences
- form the basis for the assessment of student performances
- provide some concrete examples for establishing whether students are progressing toward achievement of the syllabus objectives.

In general, this stage of the development of an outcomes-based approach resulted in schools and teachers adopting a sharper focus to their teaching and assessment, although few schools and teachers moved towards directly reporting student achievement of outcomes.

Implementation over the period 1993-95

At the same time as the developments above were under way the then Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Virginia Chadwick, strongly endorsed New South Wales participation in national collaborative activity. As the developments progressed she made clear her expectations that the Board would advise her on incorporation of the national work into Board documentation. In 1993, the completion of the national framework brought a new set of imperatives.

Board of Studies activity around outcomes and profiles

Following referral to the states of the national statements and profiles by the Australian Education Council in mid-1993, Minister Chadwick requested the New South Wales Board of Studies to commence the incorporation of outcomes from these statements and profiles into those New South Wales syllabuses that were new and into those undergoing revision. The Board was advised that, while it should preserve as much consistency as possible with the national outcomes, it could exercise flexibility to ensure that the outcomes reflected New South Wales needs.[6] The first new syllabuses developed to incorporate outcomes from the national Profiles were English K-6, Studies of Religion 7-10, Aboriginal Studies 7-10, Music 7-10 and Visual Arts 7-10.

Subsequent to these developments, the Board undertook late in 1993 to incorporate the nationally developed outcomes into all of its mandatory syllabuses. The decision to do this was, in part, taken to assist the Department of School Education to implement its teaching and learning strategy (discussed below). The timeline for completing this work was set for the end of term 1 in 1995.[7]

The Board later noted, in its submission to the Eltis Review, that the process of aligning the outcomes from the eight national Profiles into New South Wales syllabuses caused some degree of difficulty. To help refine the outcome statements the Board undertook to consult at two levels. The first phase of consultation was based around 20 regional workshops and resulted in some minor amendments to the draft statements of outcomes and pointers proposed for use in New South Wales. The second more widespread phase of consultation saw the documents released to schools for their comment. The establishment in April 1995 of the Eltis Review into Profiles and Outcomes resulted in this work being halted. The Board of Studies did not proceed to consider the amended form of the statements of syllabus outcomes and pointers recommended by this phase of consultation.

While the work of the Board of Studies was central to the successful implementation of a profiles and outcomes approach in New South Wales, it was, as noted previously, but one element of an holistic approach across the three elements of curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment and reporting.

The Department of School Education activity

In 1993 the Department of School Education set in motion an ambitious strategy to support teaching and learning in its schools. As part of its strategy, and demonstration of its commitment to the goal of improving learning outcomes in its schools, the Department restructured its head office and regional offices, creating a new Teaching and Learning portfolio with responsibility, among other things, for implementing and supporting the initiatives around outcomes and profiles. It should be noted that the Department moved more quickly than non-government schools and other school systems in New South Wales to implement the initiatives.

In December 1993, following extensive negotiations, the Department signed an Enterprise Agreement with the New South Wales Teachers Federation. This agreement placed particular emphasis on curriculum priorities and support for teachers in implementing new curricula in 1994-95.[8] Curriculum focus areas identified in 1994-95 were:

- English K-6;
- Introducing profiles in Year 7 in all key learning areas;
- Literacy across the curriculum in Year 7;
- Vocational education.

It soon became clear that the implementation timelines in the agreement were not achievable. The Department of School Education and the Teachers Federation took steps to limit the initiatives to what were regarded as the most important of the Board's initiatives.[9] In a memorandum to government schools signed jointly by the Director-General, Dr Ken Boston, and the President of the New South Wales Teachers Federation, schools were advised that the broad objective was that:

- teachers will begin programming around outcomes in English K-6 during 1995;
- Kindergarten teachers will begin to assess and report in terms of the Early Learning Profiles in Term 1, 1995;
- all other primary teachers will begin to assess and report in terms of the Profiles in English by the end of 1995.

> At the end of 1995 a joint Department of School Education and New South Wales Teachers Federation Review will determine the extent to which these things have happened.

The memorandum made similar statements directed at secondary schools about implementation in Year 7.

While the Board of Studies had responsibility for developing outcomes-based syllabuses, responsibility for teaching and learning and assessment and reporting across the schooling years, with the exception of the School Certificate at the end of Year 10, rested with schools and school systems. The Department of School Education in its submission to the Eltis Review listed five reasons for supporting an outcomes-based approach. These were to:

- improve teaching and learning;
- achieve equity goals;
- provide a clear framework of standards;
- provide parents with better reports; and
- have the capacity to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of public education.

The Department saw outcomes and profiles as presenting a clear hierarchy for reporting growth in achievement of learning outcomes across the eight levels of the national statements and profiles.

In addition to implementing the curriculum materials developed by the Board of Studies, the Department of School Education was also involved in work to develop a profile of early learning in response to a concern in schools that Level One outcomes in English were of limited use to Kindergarten teachers. Once developed, the Early Learning Profiles were trialed in schools and modified. Through comments made to the Eltis Review, this appeared to have been a successful mode of development.[10]

The Early Learning Profiles were the most strongly supported of current documents, being described as 'user-friendly' and 'well-received' in submissions to the Eltis Review. The following comment from a government primary school was typical:

> The Early Learning Profiles have been keenly accepted. Although in some ways confusing, it has still provided a very clear framework for our early educators to plan their teaching/learning activities.

The Early Childhood Education Council reported that the Early Learning Profiles gave focus and direction for teachers and made it easier to identify strengths and needs. The following factors appear to have contributed to their successful implementation:

- they were greatly informed by teachers who helped in their production;
- they were considered by teachers to be user-friendly and practical;
- they contained an eclectic approach to methodology; and

- regions gave them a high priority in their training and development programs.

Some concerns were expressed to the Review Panel about the relationship between outcomes in Foundation Level and Level One in English K-6, and also a jump from Foundation Level to Transition Level. Teachers reported that they found the profiles initially time-consuming.

Professional development support

To support the implementation of profiles and outcomes in schools, a consortium was established to oversee professional development activities. The following organisations were the members of the consortium:

New South Wales Department of School Education;
Catholic Education Commission, NSW;
The Association of Independent Schools, NSW;
Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales;
New South Wales Parents Council Inc.;
Federation of School Community Organisations;
New South Wales Joint Council of Professional Teachers Associations;
New South Wales Teacher Education Council;
New South Wales Independent Education Union;
New South Wales Teachers Federation.

The consortium was responsible for planning, coordinating and managing the range of professional development activities across the state. Funding for the work of the consortium was provided through the Commonwealth Government's National Professional Development Program (NPDP).

The Department of School Education had already developed two professional development modules (Module 1: An outcomes and profiles approach in focus; and Module 2: An outcomes and profiles approach in the classroom) aimed at raising teachers' awareness and understanding about the use of profiles and outcomes. The modules were generic in that they were not aimed at any specific curriculum area but provided a general overview of the strategy. They were developed as a series of overheads and workshop activities to explain the aims of the strategy, the relationship between national and state initiatives, some explanation of the particular elements of the strategy and explication of how the approach might impact on schools. This stage of the development was based around a train-the-trainer model and involved regional consultants presenting the strategy through pre-prepared overheads. The other school systems decided to purchase multiple copies of the two modules for their schools. In general, submissions to the Eltis Review were critical of this form of professional development, claiming it was over structured and did not adequately provide opportunities for teachers to consider relevant issues associated with the ideas and practices put forward in the modules.

The members of the NPDP consortium then planned to develop together three further modules designed to give more specific advice for secondary teachers on implementing profiles and outcomes (Modules 3, 4 and 5).[11] The modules contained strategies for teaching and learning, and assessing and reporting, in each of the key learning areas of the curriculum. Work on these modules had proceeded to the point where materials were ready for general distribution when the Eltis Review was established in April 1995.

A second professional development initiative saw the preparation of the support materials for the English as a Second Language (ESL) Scales. These scales, designed nationally as a supplement to the learning areas, were trialed, consulted on, validated and revised before being released for implementation. It was thought that the ESL Scales would provide a bridge to the key learning areas, especially English, as well as providing a common language between ESL and mainstream teachers.

The Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ATESOL) advised:

> The ESL Scales exist as an adjunct to the profiles and outcomes. They have the potential to provide ESL and mainstream teachers with a shared language to describe LBOTE (Language Backgrounds Other Than English) student achievement and to inform teaching and learning in all Key Learning Areas.

ATESOL expressed general support for the scales but aired some concerns in their submission to the Eltis Review panel. These included concern about comparability of the ESL Scales with the English outcomes and with the Early Learning Profiles. There was also evidence, in both primary and secondary schools with large LBOTE (Language Backgrounds Other Than English) populations, of anxiety at the difficulty of combining ESL scales into key learning area profiles. There was also some concern that outcomes and profiles were essentially 'monocultural constructs'.

An understanding of the ESL Scales was thought to be essential to ensure that teachers measure the achievements of the LBOTE students in terms of their understanding of the subject content rather than their facility with the English language. It was felt that the scales were an important adjunct to achieving equity for LBOTE students.

Some teachers commented that the scales were complex, that ESL training was variable and that it was difficult for mainstream teachers to become familiar with the ESL Scales while they were implementing English K-6. There was a strongly expressed need for sound professional development for ESL and mainstream teachers. It stressed to the Review Panel that it is important for mainstream teachers to understand the role the ESL Scales may play in identifying individual students' learning needs.

Changes to school practice

In addition to taking a large number of submissions from schools that addressed issues of change in school practice, the Eltis Review visited a range of schools (government and non-government, primary and secondary, rural and metropolitan) across the state. Evidence of changes in school practice was also presented at public meetings and in meetings with stakeholders.

The information available to the Review indicated that changes to school practice had been incremental over the period 1990-95. The mandatory inclusion of syllabus outcomes arising from the Board's 1991 statement on Curriculum Outcomes had brought a sharper focus to issues concerning teaching and learning in many schools. However, the development of profiles in 1993 appeared to shift this focus towards assessment and reporting with the language of 'accountability' assuming greater importance.

While profiles were seen to be a tool that could be used systemically to measure movements in educational standards, they were also seen by schools and teachers as a way of making clear or justifying what they were setting out to achieve. Perhaps the most important shift to emerge at the school level was an increasing desire to report in more criterion-referenced terms on what students knew and could do. The Eltis Review found significant evidence of initiatives at the individual school level that indicated progress in thinking about the issue of how to apply the principles of the outcomes and profiles approach to reporting at the school level.

Primary schools, in particular, appeared to be making significant progress in developing their views about profile reporting. One large primary school writing in its submission to the Eltis Review noted:

> In the period 1990-92 the school assessed and reported in a traditional normative manner based on the student record card with A - Outstanding, B - Above Average, C - Average etc. When we evaluated the process each year the teachers were dissatisfied. They felt that normative assessment gave no credit to the low ability students for despite any progress they were always ranked D or E. The assessment did not effectively promote the learning of more able students as normative ranking always gave them an A or a B ...
>
> With the advent of outcomes we developed the concept of an achievement folder, listing outcomes in the main subject areas and work habits. Teachers highlight outcomes achieved. Work samples are included in the folder to validate the achievement of outcomes ...
>
> A major component of the teaching process using outcomes is to train children in goal setting and self evaluation strategies. The outcomes for a theme are clearly set by the teacher and pupils at the commencement of the unit. Outcomes provide teachers with clear teaching goals and provide pupils with criteria for assessment.[12]

Another primary school wrote:

> Three years ago the profiles and outcomes approach was implemented as a curriculum restructuring/change process to replace an outmoded system of programming/curriculum delivery and place the focus on assessment and output.[13]

The ways in which schools approached the task of reporting against outcomes varied considerably. Some schools sought to simplify the Board's outcomes and simply report on achievement at the end of a reporting period. Others provided a greater range of outcomes and reported on those achieved and those that students were making progress towards achieving. Almost all schools thought that it was important to be able to demonstrate progress in learning from one reporting period to another and many thought it important to build portfolios of student work as evidence of achievement of specific outcomes.

Other schools tried to build profiles that reflected a continuum of learning by developing complex bar charts to report achievement of outcomes:

> The new profile sheets have lines that represent approximately one month of development for the average student.
>
> The actual position within the level is important as we need to be able to indicate to parents progression over time. It is unrealistic to expect teachers to be able to pinpoint to the exact month of development for every child. To overcome this problem, we can colour in a one centimetre strip on the continuum ... We are then saying to parents that their child is within this range.'[14]

Other primary schools reported on how they were attempting to report progress in terms of the eight levels of the national framework.

Few secondary schools that responded to the Review indicated progress on profile-based reporting. This was in part due to the fact that secondary schools had not received the same amount of support as had primary schools at that time. The major professional development strategy planned for secondary schools (Modules 3, 4 and 5) had been placed on hold with the announcement of the Review.

However, some schools visited by the Review Panel had made significant progress on shifting the emphasis of their teaching and learning towards an outcomes focus. It is fair to conclude that much work is still needed in this area in secondary schools.

The New South Wales Review of Profiles and Outcomes

The Eltis Review of Profiles and Outcomes was established in April 1995 by the incoming Government to review progress towards implementation of the approach in New South Wales schools. The Review was convened as a result of community and professional concerns about the quality of the curriculum materials being developed, the implications for teachers' work load and the speed of change.

The Review was required to:

> ... investigate, consult and report on:
>
> 1. The quality of curriculum documents that utilise outcomes and profiles, including:
>
>   (a) their consistency with principles of high quality subject content and best practice teaching methods
>
>   (b) the need to ensure that syllabuses are written in a language that is appropriate and natural to the particular subject and are easily understood and interpreted by teachers, students and parents.

2. The appropriateness of the current implementation arrangements for outcomes and profiles in New South Wales, including:
    - (a) the speed of change required by the timeline and
    - (b) implications for schools of new assessment and reporting arrangements as well as their effects on teachers' work.
3. Recommendations for further action and review in the above areas, including relationships between curriculum development, teaching and learning outcomes in schools and teacher training and development."

The Review was undertaken by an eight member panel consisting of experienced school principals, academics and a parent representative. The Review Panel met thirteen times, with some meetings extending over two and three days, held six public meetings, visited 25 schools in both metropolitan and rural New South Wales and received 568 submissions, often with comments based on broader surveys or consultation, and were referred a further 168 letters to the Minister on the issue.

The findings of the Review

While the Review acknowledged substantial support for an outcomes-based approach it also found widespread dissatisfaction with the implementation. The findings of the Review are summarised below.

Teacher professionalism

Teachers share a strong commitment to improving teaching and learning but were concerned at the increasing complexity of teaching and demands on their time.

Effective teaching

Respondents' views differed on what they understood to be effective teaching. Different views were expressed about the importance of classroom interaction with students and the relative amount of time spent on planning and preparation for lessons compared to other responsibilities such as assessing, recording and reporting students' progress. Some saw the implementation of outcomes and profiles as representing a paradigm shift from teacher-centred to student-centred learning. Others felt, however, that outcomes assessment limited opportunities for student-centred learning.

Difficulties accompanying outcomes and profiles

Both advocates and opponents of outcomes-based reporting saw difficulties with implementation. Concerns about work load, the quality of the outcomes they had to work towards and the quality of the training they had received were raised in the great majority of the submissions. Primary and secondary schools had differing perspectives on work load issues. Primary teachers were concerned with the need to report outcomes in each key learning area. Secondary teachers however were concerned with the need to report outcomes for each student taught. In some curriculum areas this might require teachers to report on about two hundred students whom they might see only for a short time each week.

Understanding of basic terms

Apparent differences in the way basic terms relating to outcomes and profiles were used arose from all sources of information available to the panel. The lack of consistent definition and usage for basic terms led to different perceptions and practices across the state. The Review found that some schools were interpreting outcomes as checklists, others saw them as learning targets or mastery outcomes. Integral to these criticisms was concern at the apparent shift by the Board of Studies in its definition of outcomes away from the 1990-91 definition in *Curriculum Outcomes*.

Other concerns were expressed about the definitions of and inconsistencies in the use of the terms 'strands', 'levels', 'pointers' and with use of the term 'profile' itself. Submissions to the Review revealed six different uses of the latter term:

- the 'national profiles';
- a report on a student expressed in outcomes;
- a portfolio of a student's work said to give a 'profile' of the student's learning;
- a graph of performance of a class or school on the outcomes;
- the outline of a subject curriculum expressed in outcomes; and
- the assessment of aspects of outcomes.

Curriculum

Although the Review identified a range of concerns about all aspects of the implementation, the most serious concerns were about curriculum issues. Commenting on the syllabuses and draft materials developed by the Board of Studies in 1994-95, the Department of School Education outlined a number of issues to be addressed by the Board of Studies as it continued its further work on development of the Draft K-10 syllabus outcomes, including:

- continuity;
- the quality and rigour of the outcomes statements;
- consistency in the standards and outcomes across all key learning areas;
- the inclusion of level statements;
- presentation of the outcomes framework within the syllabuses;
- attitudes and values outcomes; and
- the quality of pointers.

Many respondents in the Review criticised the lack of clarity of language used to describe the outcomes citing the use of jargon and user-unfriendly terms as impediments to implementation.

Concerns were also raised about the relationship between the national outcomes and profiles and the Board's syllabuses. Although the national documents were intended simply as a guide for syllabus development in each state their influence on the New South Wales Board's draft outcomes statements was crucial. In general they were adopted with only minor variations. Many respondents criticised the validity of the implied hierarchy of outcomes in the profiles. Others criticised the way in which the Board disaggregated outcomes from across the strands in the national profiles into subjects within learning areas. This criticism was strongest in the Human Society and its Environment key learning area. Another common theme was concern at the loss of the holistic nature of learning areas through 'atomisation' of disciplines.

Equity

Many submissions to the Review laid stress on outcomes as a vehicle for advancing equity. Module 1 of the Department of School Education's professional development strategy notes:

> An outcomes and profiles approach has the potential to benefit disadvantaged groups of students in a number of ways, such as:
>
> promoting inclusivity, because the same set of learning outcomes applies to all groups of students, while allowing some flexibility in the rate of progression ...
>
> fostering dignity and self esteem because achievement is focused on allowing all students to succeed.[16]

In its submission the Board of Studies notes as an advantage that the outcomes and profiles:

> focus on student growth and progress and avoid the concept of student failure.

The final report of the Review notes that:

> It is clearly of utmost importance that students should have access to curriculum including content that has value and significance for them and for others; and provides a sense of identity and worth.[17]

While recognising the potential for significant equity gains through outcomes and profiles, the Review, however, identified the need to think through issues of equity more clearly, citing dangers in the Board's view on 'avoiding failure' as conceivably lessening the commitment to attaining equity goals.

Currently implemented documents

Many responses and comments were received about curriculum materials already in place. Some of these comments have already been referred to in earlier commentary in this paper on developments prior to the establishment of the Eltis Review.

Teaching and learning

Many schools commented on what they saw as positive aspects of the introduction of the outcomes and profiles approach. Some respondents valued the increasing recognition of their professionalism. Others supported the increased focus on pedagogy, particularly those aspects directed towards recognition of individual students and their learning.

Some were less sure of the benefits. They saw the introduction of outcomes and profiles within the context of increased accountability as representing a lack of trust in teachers and their professional judgement. This view is exemplified by the comment in one submission that the approach was an attack on their professional autonomy. Others, while seeing benefits of a clear outcomes framework, saw possible loss of teachers' individuality and initiative as a consequence of following one mandatory teaching / learning style. Another major concern was the possibility of an inappropriate change in the balance of teaching / learning versus assessment / reporting activity in the classroom. Some responses questioned the profitability of the increased time spent in the classroom on assessment and reporting activities.

Timelines for implementation

The speed of implementation varied markedly across school systems in the state. Despite the attempt by the Department of School Education to slow down the process of implementation, the timeline of the original Enterprise Agreement remained a dominating factor. Statements in the subsequent Memorandum from the Director-General[18] such as:

> The emphasis, however, is on the quality of implementation not speed.
>
> Full implementation of an outcomes and profiles approach across K-10 will take a number of years and will proceed at a pace which teachers find comfortable.

were largely overlooked by government schools and many continued to work towards implementation. Non-government schools in the main were concerned with exploring issues around implementation, rather than proceeding to implementation.

In their response to the Review, government schools were almost unanimous in their condemnation of the timeline. The combined effect of the Enterprise Agreement, the National Professional Development Program (NPDP) guidelines, the introduction of new syllabuses and the focus on outcomes and profiles clearly overwhelmed many teachers and schools.

Teacher support

Commonwealth NPDP funding guidelines placing restrictions on the use of teacher relief were seen as impacting inappropriately on professional development outcomes. These guidelines were seen to result in hasty development and delivery of support modules, often before schools were ready for them. Also criticised was the train-the-trainer model and the apparent absence of adult learning principles as the basis for development.

Teacher workload and morale

Teachers responding to the Review were overwhelmingly concerned at the implications for their workload of changes to assessment and reporting arrangements. Many saw such changes as an impost and spoke of 'horrendous demands' on their time. Lowering of teacher morale was seen as an issue arising out of the top down model of change. Some respondents also noted that the timing and method of implementation of the Review were also adversely affecting teacher morale. What the Review clearly showed was that when a new curriculum initiative is to be introduced much time is needed to lay the groundwork and gain support for the initiatives.

Assessment and reporting issues

Along with issues concerning speed of implementation the assessment issues were the most significant for teachers and schools. For many teachers there was a perception that the profiles and outcomes approach was assessment—rather than curriculum—driven.

Submissions and school visits revealed that much attention was being given in primary schools to improving assessment and reporting to parents. Positive aspects of changes to practice were seen as better reporting to parents with a clear focus on what students could rather than could not do. Negative comments related to:

- the impact on teachers' workload;
- the shift in classroom activity towards assessing/reporting at the expense of teaching/learning;
- differing interpretations by teachers of what represents achievement of an outcome;
- the inconsistency in the approach of primary and secondary schools at the Year 6–7 transition;
- difficulty in reporting by levels;
- the disparity between the eight levels outlined in the national profiles (based generally on about twenty months of schooling) and the requirement of the NSW Education Reform Act (1990) for syllabuses to be constructed around stages (based on years of schooling i.e. Years K-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10); and
- support for an outcomes focus without the constraints of profile reporting.

Questions were also raised during the Review of the appropriateness of outcomes being imposed on syllabuses and then being used for assessment. Nonetheless, many schools saw that the shift in emphasis had been beneficial, with apparent tightening of the focus of assessment and better targeting of advice to parents. Fundamental to the responses, however, was the need to 'get the outcomes right' if they are going to play such an integral part in the syllabuses.

The Review also took advice on the need for parents and employers to be able to make sense of reports. This applied especially to the need to link school reports with the School Certificate at the end of compulsory schooling and the need to enable articulation with practices at the Higher School Certificate.

The Review's recommendations

The Review Panel made 21 recommendations, all of which as a consequence of further advice from agencies have been accepted by the Government. The recommendations can be broadly grouped under four headings: Strategic recommendations; syllabus implementation cycle; assessment and reporting; and professional development. The full list of recommendations is included as an appendix to this chapter (Appendix 5.1).

Summary of recommendations

The Review Panel made a number of strategic recommendations, seen as fundamental and as providing a frame of reference for the detailed recommendations which were to follow. Firstly, the Review Panel took the view that a focus on the outcomes of learning, derived from syllabuses, combined with an emphasis on the content and delivery of learning programs, has potential benefits for students, teachers, schools and their communities. A focus on outcomes was seen to have the potential to address some important aspects of equity in schooling. The Review Panel agreed that the school curriculum should contribute to a fairer society by building on students' own experiences, cultures and values while also enhancing all students' participation and success in valued areas of learning.

The Panel noted that, while the research base for an outcomes-based approach was yet not well developed, it was clear that the teaching profession generally saw potential value in outcomes as a way of assisting teachers to give a clearer and more explicit focus to classroom teaching and learning, provided that they do not place unreasonable constraints on time and flexibility. Flexibility and endorsement of teachers' judgements were keynotes of the Panel's recommendations.

Content and standards

The Review confirmed that New South Wales syllabuses should be the foundation for curriculum content in New South Wales schools. It noted that outcomes in curriculum should be clear and explicit statements of the expected content—knowledge, skills and understandings—to be achieved in an area of learning. Syllabus outcomes should state what students will be able to do if the syllabus objective has been achieved. The syllabus context was seen as important in providing a concrete reference for outcomes that make clear to what the outcome refers and should prevent any atomising, fragmenting or 'check listing' effects of an outcomes focus. Work samples and other exemplars were seen as necessary to assist in the clarification of the level of difficulty and the quality of performance intended.

A manageable number of syllabus outcomes is to be developed within each subject area, to describe explicitly the content expected to be learned by students. The syllabus outcomes are to be arranged according to the current stages of compulsory schooling (Years K-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10), but should not limit achievement to particular ages or years of schooling. The links to stages will remove the need to prescribe learning as following a predictable sequential pattern.

National curriculum framework

The Review Report endorsed continued participation by New South Wales in the development of further national curriculum initiatives. It did not propose abandoning national collaboration in curriculum, and New South Wales outcomes will be related to the national framework. The Board of Studies, however, will no longer be required to incorporate national profiles directly into New South Wales syllabuses. Syllabus outcomes will be developed directly from subject content and then related to the national framework.

Teacher workload

The Review found that teachers in schools were currently faced with a large number of demands, and that teachers felt they were asked to manage too many changes at once: new curriculum content; increased numbers of outcomes statements; pressures for changes in assessment and reporting practices; and new accountability processes. The Review proposed that these pressures be removed by:

- reducing the number of outcomes in syllabuses;
- extending and clarifying timelines for implementation; and
- providing schools with better and more useful support materials, developed from teachers' own experiences.

Primary curriculum

The major recommendations in primary schooling relate to English K-6. The Review found a good deal of support for the syllabus, but teachers were concerned about the terminology of 'functional grammar'. The Review supported the general content of the English K-6 syllabus, but suggested that the syllabus be revised with a view to:

- reducing the number of outcomes in the syllabus;
- supporting the functional approach to language in the syllabus;
- removing the terminology of 'Functional Grammar', while supporting approaches which draw on conventional grammar; and
- providing support materials that are based on teachers' and schools' experiences.

The Review also recommended that a limited number of syllabus outcomes be developed for Mathematics K-6, and that work be done to develop and trial a limited number of outcomes that would be common to all learning areas in primary curriculum.

Secondary curriculum

The Review recommended that a limited number of outcomes be developed in the core areas of English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography, within a sensible timeline. Other syllabus areas will be developed as they come up for review within the Board of Studies. In the interim, teachers are to use their professional judgement in the use of secondary syllabuses.

Assessment and reporting

The Review emphasised that assessment was integral to good teaching, enabling teachers to diagnose how well students are learning, where different approaches may be needed to teaching and where additional assistance may need to be given to individual students. The Review recommended that schools and their communities have prime responsibility for developing appropriate assessment and reporting procedures taking into account issues such as:

- the need for assessment and reporting practices to be time-efficient, and not detract from teaching and learning;
- acknowledging differences in terms of the development of individual children;
- the general well-being of the student;
- standards of comparison to enable parents to know how their children are progressing; and
- diagnosis of areas of strength and need, including those where students might be given additional support.

The Review also recommended that support be given to schools, through guidelines and options that assist in the development of reporting procedures and give indications of what constitutes valid, reliable, informative and manageable reporting to parents.

Board of Studies

The Review recommended that the Board of Studies revise its procedures for developing syllabuses, so that advice and experience of teachers and, where appropriate, specialist academics, could be provided at all stages. The confusion about the relative roles of the Board of Studies and education authorities was also seen as being in need of clarification, so that a more coordinated approach could be adopted in relation to curriculum and assessment.

General

The Review of Outcomes and Profiles in New South Wales has identified an approach to outcomes that preserves the integrity of New South Wales syllabus content, provides a coherent approach to curriculum development, is manageable in schools and should be more meaningful to schools and their communities.

Subsequent to releasing the recommendations of the Review, the Minister asked the Department of School Education, the Board of Studies and other agencies to provide advice on detailed implementation.

Progress towards implementation of the recommendations of the Review

Central authorities have been the focus of the major developments since the release of the report of the Review Committee. The Board of Studies has recently endorsed new syllabus development guidelines, consistent with those outlined in the Review for both secondary and primary schools. These guidelines provide a clear definition of outcomes and outline the intended relationship between syllabus aims, objectives, outcomes and subject content.

Education authorities and the Government have endorsed a revised timeline for release of new syllabuses. This timeline reflects the Government's priorities around literacy and numeracy in primary schools and allows for new initiatives in Health and Physical Fitness, Civics and Citizenship, and Creative Arts. It also recognises the need to continue the development of syllabuses to cover all learning areas in primary schools. A timeline for development of secondary syllabuses 7-10 has also been agreed and released to schools.

Schools have also been provided with advice on the use of existing syllabuses in the interim, pending their revision to meet the new guidelines. This advice is particularly pertinent to primary schools as they continue to implement the English K-6 syllabus. In addition, schools have received materials explaining how traditional grammatical terms can be used in conjunction with the existing syllabus.

The Board of Studies has developed and released general guidelines on assessment for both government and non-government schools. In line with the recommendations of the Review, most work on developing assessment and reporting procedures in an outcomes-based environment is occurring and has occurred at the school level.

For its own schools, the Department of School Education has also provided more specific advice on assessment and reporting, going beyond the general guidelines issued by the Board. This advice includes a statement of principles for assessment and reporting and, more recently, support materials providing exemplars of best practice in assessment and reporting against outcomes. Schools are expected to use these guidelines and advice to develop assessment and reporting strategies that meet the needs of their students and those of their local communities.

Other developments

Key Competency Pilot Project

Although proceeding entirely independently of the Review, the work of the New South Wales Key Competency Pilot Project is also relevant here. Pilot project mapping and field-testing have clearly demonstrated that key competencies have the potential to be an effective device for enhancing student learning at all curriculum stages. The project findings also indicate that the key competencies are not currently represented in curriculum documents in such a way as to ensure all students have sufficient or equitable opportunity to develop them.

Several strategies for explicitly incorporating key competencies have been explored. This has taken direction from the recommendations in the Eltis Review and has involved identifying where key competencies appear to arise naturally from syllabus documents. The work of project officers from the Board of Studies indicates that it is possible to frame syllabus outcomes that allow for a simultaneous focus on both subject content and the key competencies within the context of a particular subject.

The broader project work has shown that integrating key competencies with subject specific learning outcomes can provide cross-sectoral cohesion to a continuum of learning.

Basic Skills testing

The Basic Skills Testing Program, begun in 1989, continues to be administered to all Year 3 and Year 5 students each year in all regular government schools and some non-government schools. Tests for this program, which are based directly on New South Wales syllabus outcomes, are developed each year.

In 1997 the testing of literacy skills was extended to Year 7 students in government schools, and as a result of the McGaw review of the Higher School Certificate in NSW,[19] testing of literacy and numeracy skills is likely to be introduced for all Year 10 students.

Other testing

In 1996 and 1997 the Diocese of Sydney has chosen to assess its Year 3 and 5 students using the ACER *Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers (DART) English* materials.[20] These materials, however, relate largely to the outcomes of the national English profile.

[1] K. J. Eltis, *Focusing on Learning: Report of the Review of Outcomes and Profiles in New South Wales Schooling*. NSW Department of Education and Training, Sydney, 1995.

[2] New South Wales Government, 1990. Education Reform Act 1990, Number 8.

[3] New South Wales Board of Studies, *Curriculum Outcomes*. Author, North Sydney, 1991.

[4] New South Wales Board of Studies, 1991, p. 7.

[5] New South Wales Board of Studies, Personal Development, Health, and Physical Education, K-6, Syllabus and Support Document Formal Consultation Draft, Author, North Sydney, 1992.

[6] New South Wales Board of Studies, Submission to the Eltis Review of Profiles and Outcomes, 1995.

[7] New South Wales Board of Studies, 1995.

[8] New South Wales Department of School Education, Submission to the Eltis Committee, 1995.

[9] New South Wales Department of School Education, 1995.

[10] K. J. Eltis, 1995, p. 51.

[11] New South Wales Department of School Education, Introducing an outcomes and profiles approach , A teacher development package. Module 3: An outcomes and profiles approach to the KLA; Module 4: Implications for teaching and learning; Module 5: Issues in assessing and reporting, 1995.

[12] Unpublished submission to the Eltis Review, Submission number 273.

[13] Unpublished submission to the Eltis Review, Submission number 306.

[14] Unpublished submission to the Eltis Review, Submission number 157.

[15] New South Wales Government, Terms of Reference, NSW Review of Profiles and Outcomes, 1995.

[16] New South Wales Department of School Education, Introducing an outcomes and profiles approach, Module 1: An outcomes and profiles approach in focus, 1995, p. 16.

[17] K. J. Eltis, 1995, p. 45.

[18] Memorandum to Principals, 1994, DG94.2932.

[19] B. McGaw, *Shaping Their Future: Recommendations for Reform of the HSC*, Department of Training and Education Co-ordination, Sydney, 1997.

[20] M. Forster, J. Mendelovits & G. Masters, *Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers (DART) English*, ACER, Melbourne, 1994.

W Bodey, L. Darkin, M. Forster & G. Masters, *Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers (DART) English - Middle Primary*, ACER, Melbourne, 1997.

Appendix 5.1 Recommendations

R1: that in relation to curriculum content:

- the Minister affirm the prime role of NSW syllabuses in describing the curriculum content - knowledge, skills and understandings - in each subject area;

- the expected learning outcomes in syllabuses be the basis for the development in school settings of:

  - teaching programs for school and classroom use, and

  - data on students' learning achievements, including samples of students' work.

R2: that NSW syllabuses be developed according to the following framework:

- syllabus outcomes, to be explicit statements of the knowledge, skills and understandings expected to be learned from teaching programs developed from NSW syllabuses. These would serve a number of purposes:

  - to provide a reference for schools and teachers in developing their teaching and learning programs

  - to help schools and teachers, in negotiation with school communities, to develop and apply manageable assessment and reporting strategies for individual students, and

  - to enable, through sample surveys, system monitoring at state and national levels.

- statements of syllabus outcomes for each of the five *stages* of compulsory schooling (ie Years K-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10) to be developed by the Board of Studies for each subject, and replace the current use of such terms as 'profiles' and 'levels' in NSW.

- the Board of Studies no longer be required to incorporate the National Profiles directly into NSW syllabuses.

R3: that in terms of national curriculum initiatives, NSW should:

- on the basis of its experience with outcomes and syllabus development, influence the development of further national initiatives in curriculum collaboration

- continue to contribute to national objectives in curriculum, through participation in national studies and surveys of learning outcomes

- refer the findings of this Review to other Ministers, through the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, and to the Curriculum Corporation, to assist in the evaluation of the national curriculum framework.

R.4: that priority be given by the Board of Studies and relevant authorities to developing syllabus outcomes and support materials that meet the needs of the full range of students, including those who need additional support to complete their schooling successfully.

R5: that to accompany syllabus documents and to emphasise the potential significance of a focus on outcomes as an approach to teaching and learning, support documents be developed containing units of work and work samples, across the five stages, and indicating how the units of work and work samples relate to corresponding material contained in national profile statements.

R6: that for the *English K-6 Syllabus*:

- the existing syllabus continue to be implemented in 1996 and 1997, with Functional Grammar no longer being mandatory
- the experience of schools in using the English K-6 syllabus is to inform a revision of the syllabus by the Board of Studies, which will review and reduce the number of outcomes and lead to the development of a replacement syllabus and support document(s) based on stages, for introduction in 1998
- the Board of Studies review the use of 'Functional Grammar' in English K-6 with a view to:
    - supporting the functional approach to language that underpins the syllabus
    - replacing the 'Functional Grammar' terminology with conventional terminology
    - developing a document to include sources for teachers relating to conventional grammar and its use in the classroom
- in the process of developing and trialling the replacement syllabus and support document(s), full consultation occur with teachers and schools.

R7: that, in order to bring the *Mathematics K-6 Syllabus* into conformity with the NSW Education Reform Act 1990:

- a suitable range of manageable outcomes be derived from the current syllabus for each of the stages in terms of knowledge, skills, and understandings
- work be undertaken with teachers to develop and trial these outcomes so that they are based on best practice
- syllabus outcomes be provided in a support document, which indicates how they might assist teaching, assessment and reporting in Mathematics K-6
- the preparation of these outcomes be completed during 1996, with professional development to occur in preparation for full implementation in 1997.

R8: that the Board of Studies:

- continue to develop syllabuses as they are due for revision, with a limited number of syllabus outcomes as they relate to stages, using a process of thorough consultation with teachers and schools;
- release these syllabuses to schools beginning with the following suggested schedule:

English K-6[1]	1998
Mathematics K-6[2]	1997
PDHPE	1997, for optional implementation
	1998/1999, for full implementation
HSIE	1998, for optional implementation
	1999/2000, for full implementation

- consider the integration of Citizenship Education as part of this developmental work.
- investigate the possibility of developing a small number of generic outcomes across the primary curriculum, which would encompass all key learning areas.

R9: that, as they come up for review, for each of the Year 7-10 Syllabuses in the areas of English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography

- a limited number of outcome statements, related to stages and derived from individual syllabuses, be developed to focus on knowledge, skills and understandings
- illustrations of the standard of performance relating to outcomes be provided in support documents to guide teachers' understandings, these to be in the form of work samples, units of work and other exemplars, and include indications of how the work samples and units of work relate to corresponding material in the national profile statements
- the relationship to the School Certificate subject descriptors of the syllabus outcomes, especially of Stage 5, be clearly established, with revision of the current descriptors where necessary
- the integration of Citizenship Education be considered as part of this developmental work
- that realistic timeframes be set for the development of these syllabuses to enable teachers, schools and academics to contribute fully.

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[1] See Recommendation 6

[2] See Recommendation 7

R10: that as an integral part of the developmental work for *Science 7-10*, a Science Symposium be held, involving teachers, including country teachers, academics, and others with professional interests in this area, to give advice on:

- the content and approach of the Science 7-10 Syllabus
- revision of the current draft Science 7-10 Syllabus
- links between Science 7-10 and the Science 11-12 Syllabuses.

R11: that where any syllabus comes up for review, outcomes be derived from the syllabus for each stage. Work samples and other units of work should also be prepared as part of the support materials, and include indications of how the work samples and units of work relate to corresponding material in the national profile statements.

R12: that:

- until they are reviewed, those syllabuses issued incorporating national strands and outcomes be used according to the best judgement of teachers
- those syllabuses now in draft form incorporating national strands and outcomes be reviewed, consistent with Recommendation 2.

R13: that in relation to assessment and reporting practices

- schools and their communities be responsible for devising their own procedures, with opportunities for community members to express views and indicate their expectations in relation to reporting, taking into account issues such as:
    - the need for assessment and reporting practices to be time-efficient, and not detract from teaching and learning
    - acknowledging differences in terms of the development of individual children
    - the general well-being of the student
    - standards of comparison to enable parents to know how their children are progressing
    - diagnosis of areas of strength and need, including those where students might be given additional support
- support be given to schools during 1996 through the provision of thoroughly considered guidelines and options, which assist in the development of reporting procedures, and give indications of what constitutes valid, reliable, informative and manageable reporting to parents.

R14: that to contribute to the professional development of teachers, schools across the State be invited to participate in the development of syllabus outcomes and support documents by offering examples from their own experience and by trialling materials developed in 1996 and 1997.

R15: that materials be developed to explain clearly the intentions, purposes and rationale for introducing outcomes, so that schools can be informed and assisted in developing their own approaches to the incorporation of syllabus outcomes into their teaching and learning programs.

R16: in the provision of professional development:

- there should be very strong input from a range of schools, based on identified 'best practice'
- support materials be written so that adequate provision is made for teachers to identify and discuss implications for their own circumstances
- schools be the focus for delivering professional development, to ensure that the principal and staff can determine how initiatives relate to their existing needs, priorities and their workload
- diverse and flexible strategies, including the use of technology, should be adopted to cater for all teachers, including those in small schools and remote areas
- schools be encouraged to work with one another and with other relevant groups (universities, professional associations, community groups) as they explore new approaches and determine what is best for them in their own context.

R17: that the Minister ask the Ministerial Advisory Council on the Quality of Teaching to provide advice on how teacher education institutions should give students adequate preparation with regard to current syllabuses and their implementation, including assessment and reporting.

R18: that in relation to the community's role in professional development:

- that the community participate in the preparation and delivery of materials for use in schools with their communities
- that schools be encouraged to ensure wider community participation in the development of strategies that enhance understanding of new syllabuses.

R19: that the Board of Studies review its procedures for developing and trialling syllabus and support documents so that productive input from teachers and academics with expertise in the area(s) is assured at all stages.

R20: Having noted the benefits of collaboration between school sectors and professional and community groups that is evident from the operation of the National Professional Development Program, that Commonwealth and State Governments should continue to support this type of collaboration in their consideration of present and future NPDP submissions.

R21: that in future NPDP work more opportunities be provided for schools to gain direct access to funding to support local initiatives to incorporate outcomes into teaching/learning and assessment programs.

6 Implementation of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* in Victoria

David Howes

Introduction

The development and implementation of Victoria's version of the national Statements and Profiles, the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* (CSF), is a story with four dominant elements. The first is the production of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* itself. The second is the development, in a very short space of time, of a significant number of substantial print resources to support the implementation of the CSF. The third is the implementation of a range of strategies designed to use the outcome statements contained in the CSF as both a basis and a resource for reporting student achievement to parents, school communities and the system. The fourth is the extraordinary speed with which the production of these materials has been undertaken and the impact of this on schools.

This last-mentioned element is one that has characterised education in Victoria since the election of the Kennett Liberal-National Party Coalition government in October 1992. The Coalition came to power after twelve years of Labor rule with a huge majority and a mandate for change. The new Minister for Education, Don Hayward, together with the new Director of School Education, Geoff Spring (recruited from the Northern Territory), set about implementing significant changes to the delivery of state education under the banner of the 'Schools of the Future' reform program. The key themes of that program were—and continue to be—efficiency, accountability and a repeated emphasis on what was and is defined as the central goal of education: to enable each child to achieve their full potential.

On the administrative front in the government sector, these themes were realised in part through school closures, a downsizing in both the teaching force and the bureaucracy, an increase in school accountability through the development of school charters and annual reporting and the divestiture to schools of many functions previously carried out by the central bureaucracy. On the curriculum front, the themes were realised through the development of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework,* the introduction both of a state-wide standardised testing program and a requirement of schools to assess the performance of all students in English and Mathematics against the CSF in 1996, and in all other key learning areas from 1997 on. There was also a commitment, both of rhetoric and funds, to the utilisation of technology as an integral component of teaching, learning and assessment practices in schools.

Background to the development of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework*

Prior to and during the development of the national Statements and Profiles, the documents that defined the curriculum for the compulsory years of schooling in Victoria were the *Frameworks* documents. These documents, published in 1988, were not intended to be prescriptive, but rather were intended to provide a structure through which schools could produce courses tailored to meet the needs of their own students. The *Frameworks* documents defined the school curriculum in a way that clearly informed the development of the national statements and profiles. Ten *Frameworks* areas were defined, nine 'subject' areas and an area defined as 'School Curriculum and Organisation P - 12'. The subject areas were:

The Arts
Commerce
English Language
Languages Other than English (LOTE)
Mathematics
Personal Development
Science
Social Education
Technology Studies

It was not only in this definition of the curriculum that the emerging national Statements and Profiles could be observed. The content of the English and mathematics *Frameworks* documents foreshadowed (or perhaps reflected) the trend beginning to become evident in education towards a recognition of the value of defining in some way the learning outcomes that the school curriculum was designed to produce.

A section titled 'Growth Points in English' was included at the back of the English document. This section drew on 'research ... on the language produced by children in naturalistic settings'. The introduction to the section defined the 'growth points' as 'broad characteristics of language growth rather than strict performance criteria' and further qualified them as 'not intended to be either rigid or exhaustive ... [they should be] regarded as a guide to language growth rather than a definitive statement on the subject'.[1]

The mathematics document included (again at the back) a 'Scope and Sequence Chart', set out in sixteen levels which were linked to school year levels. As with the English document, the claims made for the usefulness of the chart were heavily qualified:

> the Scope and Sequence Chart is not set in stone but is a slice in time. There is no way of predicting the changes in content which will be necessary if mathematics is to be made relevant for students who live in a changing society, increasingly affected by technology.[2]

The location of the 'Growth Points' and the 'Scope and Sequence Chart' at the very end of the English and mathematics *Frameworks* documents signified the lack of emphasis the *Frameworks* documents as a whole placed on learning outcomes. The dominant emphasis of the documents was on the importance of the processes of learning. This was particularly true of the mathematics document. The objectives of mathematics as defined by the document included providing access to mathematics for the widest range of students possible, fostering an investigatory / problem solving approach to mathematics, and emphasising the importance of language in the mathematics classroom. The *Frameworks* documents were clearly designed to serve not only as guidelines of appropriate curriculum content but as a form of professional development with the aim of producing changes in teaching practice.

The swing in emphasis within Victoria towards an outcomes-based curriculum and a consequent move to balance the attention given to process with at least equal attention given to content came with the development and publication of the Victorian *English Profiles Handbook* in 1991[3] and the release of the draft Victorian Number and Space Profile in 1992.[4] These documents were far less qualified in the language they used to talk about outcomes. The introduction to the *English Profiles Handbook* argued that

> profiles ... provide a common language and framework for charting students' progress which will assist in the communication of detailed and accurate information between teachers and between schools.[5]

The introduction to the draft Number and Space Profile was even more confident:

> [The Profile enables parents to be] provided with a detailed picture of their child's achievement and progress in mathematics, one that gives information about the mathematical competencies of their child in plain and simple English. All aspects of learning number and space are represented in the profile. The handbook covers the skills of mathematics as well as the process of learning and how these can be applied.[6]

One of the most interesting aspects of recent curriculum history in Victoria is the fact that the momentum towards this implementation of an outcomes-based approach to schooling was not halted or even slowed by the election of what was perceived as a conservative coalition government, elected after twelve years of what were generally regarded as 'progressive' education policies, including the move towards outcomes-based curricula represented by the publication of documents such as the *English Profiles Handbook* and the draft *Victorian Number and Space Profile*. Indeed, it is quite wrong to assert, as Marsh does, that 'Victoria went from being a strong advocate and leading State in promoting national statements and profiles to being a strong critic'.[7] What is true is that Victoria rejected what it described as the 'imposition' of a national curriculum and was highly critical of the construction of a number of the national Statements and Profiles. What is not true is that Victoria became a critic of outcomes-based education. On the contrary, Victoria moved further and faster than any other state to develop, mandate and implement a state-wide outcomes-based curriculum framework and assessment and reporting program. The clearest evidence for this is the introduction to the *Course Advice* materials published by the Victorian Directorate of School Education in 1995 to support teachers in the implementation of the CSF:

> The *Curriculum and Standards Framework* reflects widespread confidence that teaching with clearly specified student learning outcomes can help to improve curriculum and individual student learning.[8]

The development of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework*

The *Curriculum and Standards Framework* document, which now sets the framework within which all Victorian Government schools are required to develop their curriculum, is derived directly and explicitly from the national Statements and Profiles. The Foreword to the document, written by the Chairperson of the Board of Studies, (Howard Kelly) and the Chief Executive Officer (Professor Sam Ball) states that:

> Much of the CSF's content is adapted from the National Statement and Profiles, and the Board of Studies acknowledges the work done Australia-wide in producing that material.[9]

This is reiterated later in the Introduction to the CSF:

> The CSF builds on and advances the important work undertaken by the national project.[10]

The development of the CSF was, however, anything but a simple matter of adapting national documents to a local context. Indeed, at the 2 July 1993 AEC/MOVEET meeting (see Chapter 1), it was the Victorian Minister for Education, Don Hayward, who moved the motion that resulted in the abandonment of a nationally consistent implementation of the statements and profiles project. The media release issued from his office on the afternoon of the meeting made Victoria's position quite clear. It was headed, 'Victorian resolution on national curriculum statements accepted by Ministers' and quoted the Minister:

> Victoria has grave reservations about several of the national statements and profiles and could not be a party to any resolution which implied approval of their content.[11]

The first task the Minister then gave to his newly constituted Board of Studies was:

> to advise me on the content of the statements and profiles and how they should be used... I will be asking the Board of Studies to advise on what deficiencies exist in the documents and whether the documents should be modified ... this process will address the problem of inadequate consultation which has characterised the development of several of the statements and profiles to date.[12]

The Minister for Education had been convinced of the need for a review of the documents by two groups. The first was a group of tertiary mathematicians based at the University of Melbourne, who tabled a petition to the Minister expressing 'our concern and dismay at the process whereby the Mathematical Profiles have been produced ... they are both substantially flawed and give an entirely unbalanced view of the skills needed by a student to cope with training in any subject requiring a knowledge of Mathematics'. The second was a group of tertiary scientists who were scathing in their criticisms of the national documents in their particular disciplines. An example of the tone of such criticisms is provided by this extract from a letter to *The Age* newspaper from Professor Geoffrey Opat, Professor of Physics at the University of Melbourne:

> The content [of the Profiles] is boring, poorly written, repetitious, politically correct, and specifying little. Science areas at the senior levels no longer consist of the disciplines of physics, chemistry, biology, etc. ... Their content is a mishmash.[13]

The mathematics academics had persuaded the Minister very soon after the election of the Coalition government that an urgent review of the Mathematics Statement and Profile was needed. A Ministerial Advisory Committee was established to provide the Minister with preliminary advice (such committees were also set up to report on a number of other key learning areas). The terms of reference of the committee were to:

- identify deficiencies in the existing draft of the Mathematics Profile;
- recommend modifications to address these deficiencies;
- recommend a process and time frame for the modifications.

The Committee found that:

- the outcome statements at levels 7 and 8 did not quantify the learning demonstrated by high achieving students adequately;
- the outcome statements were sometimes too wordy;
- many of the pointers were impossible to understand;
- the Profile was not suitable for reporting to parents;
- there was some danger that the pointers would be seen and used as curriculum items in course development (that is, as a form of a checklist);
- none of the components of the Profile (strands, outcomes, pointers, work samples) provide enough detail to design courses of study with any depth;
- the Profile was therefore not suitable for course design or school based curriculum auditing or review.

It was these findings of the working party that prompted the Minister to ask the Board of Studies for a full review of each of the national Statements and Profiles. The Board was given four central Terms of Reference. They were to investigate:

- the extent to which the national statements provide an appropriate framework for developing school curriculum;
- the extent to which profiles describe the full range of student achievement in the compulsory years of schooling;
- the extent to which profiles are appropriate for use in reporting to parents, curriculum planning and collecting system-wide data on students achievements;
- the processes and timeframe to undertake any necessary trialing or modifications within Victoria.

The Board embarked on an extensive process of consultation in September and October of 1993 through response questionnaires and consultation workshops involving teachers, teacher educators, principals, subject associations and targeted academics.

The advice provided by the Directorate of School Education (now the Department of Education) to the Board of Studies was obviously critical to the outcomes review. The DSE response made the following observations about the respective key learning areas:

The Arts

The response was generally positive about the statement and profile. The main concern expressed was that the creative process was under-emphasised at the expense of the development of technical skills and completed products. This related to a perceived need for the document to emphasise the significant contribution of the Arts to the development/cultivation of creativity as well as the cognitive domain.

English

The response noted that the Working Party established to advice the Minister prior to the AEC meeting in July 'believed that the full range of activities in English classrooms was covered and there was no element of skill or knowledge which is an essential part of the English curriculum that did not find a place. No single theoretical framework had been privileged, nor had any approach been disenfranchised'. A number of relatively minor concerns were raised. It was argued, for example, that the Profile reflected a view of reading/viewing as being about interpretation, rather than the active construction of meaning, and that the speaking/listening strand of the Profile suggested that the prime function of talk was presentation rather than exploration.

Health and Physical Education

The response was very positive about the national Statements and Profiles, arguing that the documents represented a 'current and forward thinking' curriculum that described an adequate range of achievements of students, and that 'traditional subjects such as health education, physical education, home economics, outdoor education, personal development education, human relations education, religious education and life skills education could draw significantly upon the profile for reporting purposes'.

Languages other than English

The response was critical of the Languages other than English (LOTE) Profile and Statement, recommending that 'given the significance of the changes required to be undertaken, both the draft national Statement and Profile are unacceptable or inappropriate for the development of curriculum frameworks in Victoria and for reporting on student achievement'. Specific concerns were that the area of listening was underemphasised, and that outcome statements which exemplify the development of sociocultural understanding and knowledge needed to be incorporated within and across all levels in the Profile.

Mathematics

The response recommended that the 'Profile not be endorsed until the purposes and uses of the document are clarified' and until the deficiencies identified by the earlier working party had been remedied.

Science

The DSE response recommended that 'the national Science Statement and Profile both require significant changes to be undertaken prior to being acceptable for use as the basis of curriculum planning for Science in Victorian schools and for reporting on student achievement'. The response reflected the main concerns of the Ministerial working party which were that the strength of the Profile, 'in that it relates science to its applications in a range of daily activities', was 'undermined by an overall impression of superficiality and sometimes inaccuracy', and that 'levels 7 and 8 of the Profile are ... based on a sociology of education at the expense of the disciplines of science'.

Studies of Society and Environment

The response from the DSE was highly critical of the Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) Profile and Statement, to the extent that it recommended that 'the National Studies of Society and Environment Statement and Profile both require significant changes to be undertaken prior to being acceptable for use as the basis of curriculum planning in Victorian schools and for reporting on student achievement'. Specifically, it argued that there was a need for clearer representation of the disciplines in the profiles, and that the language used in the Profile was unduly value-laden and should be replaced by more open-ended and politically neutral statements of learning goals.

Technology

The response was not as critical of Technology as it was of Science. It did, however, state that 'the Technology Profile requires a number of significant changes to be made prior to describing the full range of student achievement in the compulsory years of schooling'. These changes included substantially rewording many of the outcome statements to remove vagueness, clarifying the definition of technological systems, and emphasising the active rather than passive use of information technology.

On the basis of the consultation, including the response from the DSE, the Board presented its Review to the Minister in December 1993. The key points of the Review were:

- the eight key learning areas adopted for the national Statements and Profiles do provide an adequate basis for a curriculum and standards frameworks for Victoria, and such a framework should be developed;
- the concept and organisational structure of strands and levels of achievement within learning areas is appropriate for such a framework;
- the structure of multiple strands at each of eight levels is inappropriate for reporting student achievement;

- in broad terms, The Arts, English , Technology and Health and Physical Education require least adaptation but none should be adopted in their existing form;
- both Mathematics and Science are subject to more severe criticism especially from universities in relation to the attention paid to the development of skills and knowledge within the disciplines and require modification;
- Languages Other than English and Studies of Society and Environment require significant adaptation including a reconsideration of the strands.

The Minister accepted the Board's advice, and asked the Board to begin the work of developing the CSF. Eight Key Learning Area Committees (KLACs) were set up and given the responsibility for the development of their respective sections of the CSF. The Board wrote to all school principals indicating that the CSF would provide a framework within which schools would continue to have responsibility for the development of their own teaching and learning programs.

By July 1994, a draft of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* was ready for consultation. In the two months that followed, a series of consultation workshops took place, the Board worked intensively with a sample of 38 primary and secondary schools from all sectors, and over 5000 written responses were processed.

Following this consultation, the CSF was revised and modified. It was endorsed by the Board of Studies and approved for publication by the Minister for Education in December 1994, and distributed to all Victorian schools in early 1995.

In the end, there were five significant differences between the CSF and the national Statements and Profiles:

- The sixteen documents that made up the Statements and Profiles were combined into a single document which highlights a curriculum focus and particular learning outcomes for each strand at each level. The 'Curriculum Focus' statements provide an indication of the kind of learning contexts in which it is anticipated the learning outcomes will be demonstrated.
- An explicit link was made between levels of achievement and school year levels as follows:

Level 1	End of Preparatory year
Level 2	End of Year 2
Level 3	End of Year 4
Level 4	End of Year 6
Level 5	End of Year 8
Level 6	End of Year 10
Level 7	Enrichment of those exceeding Level 6

Levels 7 and 8 of the National Profiles were collapsed into one level.

- The CSF omitted the level statements of the national documents which attempted to provide a summary of achievement across a KLA at a particular level.
- Documents titled *ESL Companion to the English CSF*[14] and *Guidelines for Implementing the Curriculum and Standards Framework for Students with Disabilities and Impairments*[15] became important components of the framework.

This last-mentioned point was a significant development. The introduction of the *ESL Companion* effectively brought English as a Second Language teaching programs into the mainstream curriculum, while many have suggested that the *Guidelines for Students with Disabilities* represents a significant advance in the conceptualisation of education for students with disabilities and impairments.

ESL programs had an uncertain status under the national Statements and Profiles. They received but one ambiguous mention in the English Statement: 'The English curriculum encompasses studies which ... include a significant part of English as a second language (ESL) programs'.[16] The development of the *ESL Companion to the English CSF* gave ESL programs the same status as mainstream English programs and provided schools with an important option for assessing and reporting the achievement of ESL students (see the section on 'Assessment and reporting').

The *ESL Companion to the English CSF* was based on the *ESL Scales*[17] which were developed as a national project of the Australian Education Council. The writers of the *ESL Companion* adapted these scales to reflect the structure of the CSF with a curriculum focus, outcome statements and examples. The strands of the *ESL Companion* reflect those in the English section of the CSF with one difference: the 'Communication' strand correlates to the 'Text' strand of the English section of the CSF, but has greater emphasis on communicative language use and on the acquisition of English. In some cases, outcomes and examples from the *ESL Scales* were incorporated into the *ESL Companion* with minimal change, in others the wording has been altered to reflect the nature of ESL learning which is described in each stage.

Unlike the levels of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework*, the stages of the ESL companion document are organised in Bands of schooling, that is, Lower primary, Middle/Upper primary and Secondary. This organisation was used to ensure that the document reflected the differing points of entry of ESL learners to school and the articulation of the ESL companion document with the English section of the CSF (see Figure 6.1). As with the CSF, however, the outcomes and examples are related to the age of ESL learners in secondary settings as required by the CSF structure, rather than to the developmental continuum described in the *ESL Scales*.

The *Guidelines for Students with Disabilities and Impairments* established that learning activities for such students should be 'selected from the eight key learning areas and be clearly linked to expected student learning outcomes'. While the document makes repeated references to the need for individual programs for students with disabilities and impairments that are designed to build on students' existing

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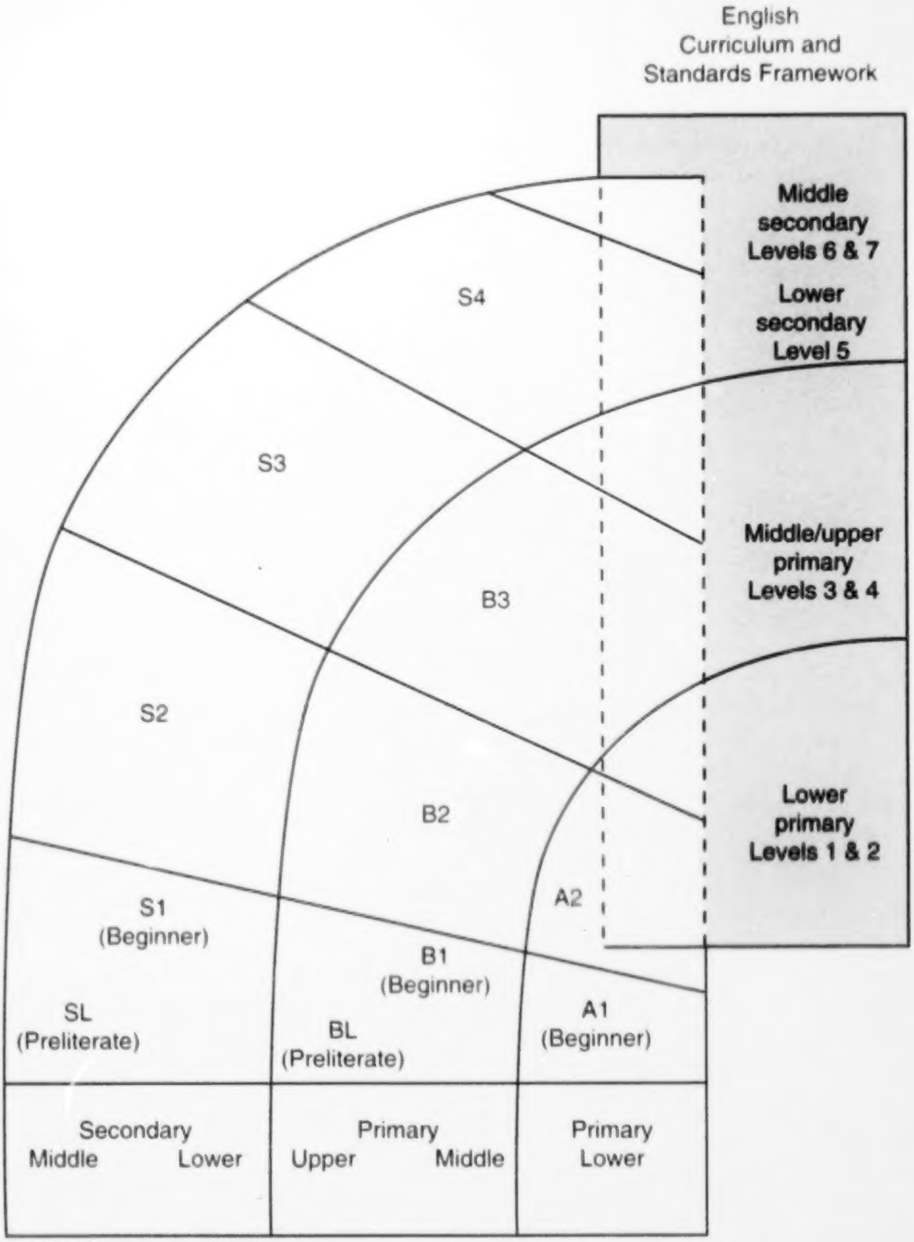
English
Curriculum and
Standards Framework
Middle secondary Levels 6 & 7
Lower secondary Level 5
Middle/upper primary Levels 3 & 4
Lower primary Levels 1 & 2
S4
S3
S2
S1 (Beginner)
SL (Preliterate)
B3
B2
B1 (Beginner)
BL (Preliterate)
A2
A1 (Beginner)
Secondary
Middle
Lower
Primary
Upper
Middle
Primary
Lower

Figure 6.1 Relationship of ESL Companion Document to English Section of CSF

strengths and preferred learning styles, it also locates such individualised programs within the framework established for mainstream students:

> The *Curriculum and Standards Framework* supports the principle that individual programs should be developed in conjunction with Program Support Groups, where applicable for students with disabilities and impairments. These programs should be designed from the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* ... All curriculum planning in schools, including individual planning for students with disabilities and impairments, will need to be based on the eight key learning areas as presented in the *Curriculum and Standards Framework*.[18]

The development of these *Guidelines* has been seen by many as a significant move away from the assumption that a separate curriculum is needed for students with disabilities and impairments that has often been perceived as underpinning the education of such students.

In addition to these structural changes, the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* made significant changes within most key learning areas to the original national Statements and Profiles, as described in the following paragraphs.

The Arts

The major difference between the Arts section of the CSF and the National Statement and Profile was the inclusion in the CSF of 'Graphic Communication' as a strand, in Levels 5-7, which was not included in the national materials.

English

The mode in the national Profile named 'Reading and Viewing' was renamed 'Reading'. The introduction to the English section of the CSF notes, however, that

> the *reading* mode refers to all ways of constructing meaning from texts, including non-print texts. This includes reading printed texts such as books, magazines, posters and charts, and viewing visual texts such as films, videos, photographs and graphic materials.[19]

The other significant change from the national Statement and Profile was that the place of grammar and spelling was explicitly located in the CSF through the following statement in the Introduction to the English section of the CSF:

> The organisational structure ensures the provision of a balanced English curriculum, within which the conventional aspects of English such as grammar, punctuation and spelling retain their importance. Grammar and punctuation are located primarily in the linguistic structures and features strand, while spelling is found in the strategies strand.[20]

The current and increasing importance of technology in English was also given more emphasis in the CSF than the Profile through the inclusion of the following statement in the introduction:

> The increasing use of technological tools has implications for literacy acquisition and development. New and emerging needs such as 'computer literacy' mean that different uses of literacy need to be considered in the classroom.[21]

Health and Physical Education

Two major changes were made to this key learning area. The first was that several strands were combined at Levels 1-3, including:

- Human Movement and Physical Activity in the Community;
- Human Development, Human Relations, and Safety;
- Health of Individuals and Populations and People and Food.

The effect of this was that at Levels 1-3 the KLA consisted of three strands while at Levels 4-7 there were seven.

The second change was that the 'People and Food' strand of the national Statement and Profile was substantially revised to reflect a more positive approach to food preparation and consumption. This avoided what had been perceived as a negative overemphasis on illnesses associated with food preparation and consumption.

LOTE

The three strands of the national Statement and Profile, that is, Oral Interaction, Reading and Responding, and Writing, were changed to three strands (Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing) and two sub-strands (Using language for personal and social purposes).

Mathematics

The content strands of the Mathematics section of the CSF remained the same as those of the Mathematics Statement and Profile (Algebra, Chance and Data, Measurement, Number and Space). The 'Process' and 'Attitude' strands, however, were not retained as separate entities. An additional strand titled 'Mathematical Tools and Procedures' was developed. This was a content-based strand that focused on aspects of 'mathematics specific' process behaviour. It addressed the aspects and strategies of mathematical thinking and the use of tools that can be taught to students. Other significant changes made at the sub-strand level included the following:

- The 'Number' strand in the CSF has five sub-strands rather than the seven in the national Profile. The 'Calculator' sub-strand was subsumed into 'Mathematical tools', and 'Equations' into 'Number patterns and relationships'.
- The 'Data' section of 'Chance and Data' has three sub-strands in the CSF rather than the four of the national Profile, 'Organising Data' being incorporated into 'Posing Questions and Collecting Data'.

Perhaps the most significant change to the Mathematics Profile, however, was that, in order to provide more specificity about the content of the Mathematics curriculum, a significant number of the pointers or examples of outcomes in the national Profile were used as the basis for developing individual outcome statements in the CSF. As a consequence, the Mathematics section of the CSF contains something in the region of 900 separate outcome statements.

Science

The 'Working Scientifically' strand present in the national Statement and Profile was incorporated into each of the strands across the Science CSF. The 'Energy' strand from the national document was moved to fit mainly within the 'Physical World' strand, and parts of it also appeared within other strands of the Science CSF. Many outcomes within Science were moved to different levels in the CSF. Some outcomes within the national materials were 'dispersed' and cannot be easily identified within the CSF.

SOSE

Two major changes to the SOSE learning area were made. The strand organisers were abolished, and the 'Investigation, Communication and Participation' strand reworked into the 'SOSE inquiry strategies' which were identified as applicable to each strand. The relationship between the SOSE content strands and 'traditional studies' was also made explicit in the introduction to the SOSE section of the CSF:[22]

SOSE strands	Traditional study area
Time continuity and change	History, philosophy, anthropology, archaeology, ecology, multidisciplinary studies (Aboriginal studies, Asian studies, women's studies)
Place and space	Geography, geology, ecology, history, anthropology, multidisciplinary studies (Asian studies, environmental studies, women's studies)
Culture	Anthropology, sociology, philosophy, psychology, history, studies in religion, women's studies
Resources	Accounting, business studies, ecology, economics, geography, history, legal studies, sociology, multidisciplinary studies (environmental studies, global studies)
Natural and social systems	Adopts a systems view of the world which can be taken by all disciplines in SOSE

Technology

Technology outcomes in the CSF were sequenced. This was not the case in the national Profile. The 'Designing, Making and Appraising' strand from the national Statement and Profile was dropped from the CSF. This strand became 'Technology Process' with phases of Investigating, Designing, Producing and Evaluating and was made an integral part of the three strands of 'Materials', 'Information' and 'Systems'.

The *Curriculum and Standards Framework* and the Key Competencies

When the Minister asked the Board of Studies to review the national Statements and Profiles, he also asked it to review the Mayer 'key competencies'[23] and to provide advice on their quality and comprehensiveness (including whether 'cultural understanding' should be added), the potential for their use in assessing and reporting student achievement, and the extent to which they were embedded in Victorian curriculum documents.

The findings of the Board review were that:

- the set of key competencies outlined in the Report of the Mayer Committee did relate to a substantial component of the school curriculum;
- as a result of a general lack of agreement about the definition of 'cultural understanding', it would be inappropriate to add 'cultural understanding' as a separate competency;
- it was inappropriate to use the Mayer performance levels to utilise the key competencies in their current form to assess and report on student achievement;
- the key competencies were substantially implicit in current curriculum documents.

There have since been three significant projects which have investigated how key competencies might be incorporated into the curriculum and assessment and reporting practices of schools. These have been an audit of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE, the certificate awarded to students who successfully complete the Year 11-12 course of study) and CSF curriculum documents, a Schools Pilot Project and a Support Materials Project.

The findings of these projects have reflected those of related projects and research in other states and territories. In summary, they have found that:

- most teachers are familiar with and endorse the principles involved in key competency development;
- there is continuing confusion about the term 'competency', largely due to the prevalence of industry competencies which typically describe less transferable learning;
- key competencies are generally seen as being valuable and applicable to a wider range of contexts than those targeted in the Mayer report, which focused largely on workplace settings;

- levels of achievement are regarded as a necessary feature of reliable criterion referenced performance assessment, but the Mayer levels do not provide an adequate basis (some schools in Victoria, for example, Footscray Yarraville Secondary College, have adapted performance levels from those developed by Alverno College in the United States to describe key competency development);
- the names and definitions of the Mayer competencies warrant revision. The 'mathematics' and 'technology' competencies are seen to be significantly less generic than the others and pose significant problems when trying to teach and assess them as key competencies;
- there has been considerable support for the inclusion of variations on the 'cultural understanding' key competency.

Victoria has agreed to the draft Australian Curriculum and Assessment Certification Authorities (ACACA) agreed minimum position (6 June 1996) on incorporating the key competencies into curriculum, assessment and reporting at the senior secondary level. That agreement notes that the agreed position is a 'minimum position and does not preclude States and Territories from further developing Key Competency assessment and reporting'. And indeed, the concept of key competencies has already played a significant role in informing the development of the new VCE Study, *Industry and Enterprise Studies*,[24] which will be available for students in Years 11 and 12 to take from 1997 onwards. The aims of the study include enabling students to 'understand and demonstrate generic work-related competencies'.

Further, 'generic work-related competencies' is listed as one of the 'Characteristics of the study'. The study design then notes:

> The work of the Finn (1991) and Mayer (1992) committees identified a number of generic work-related competencies that all students need to develop ... Generic work-related competencies include the key competencies recommended by the Mayer Committee.[25]

The study design further notes

> the purpose of each work requirement requires students to develop and apply generic work-related competencies and enterprise ... When planning courses, teachers should identify the enterprising skills and competencies to be addressed in the work requirements.[26]

In addition, the new Victorian Minister for Education, Phil Gude, has asked the Board of Studies to include 'key competencies' in considering the development of a state-wide assessment program for secondary students (this is detailed in the section on 'Assessment and reporting' later in the chapter). It is therefore clear that, while the precise status of key competencies in Victoria, as in other states and territories, remains unresolved, the agreement to the ACACA minimum position, the development and introduction of the new VCE study, and the possible inclusion of key competencies in a secondary school assessment program will ensure that the concept of key competencies will continue to play a significant role in informing school curricula in Victoria.

The implementation of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework*

The take-up and implementation of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* in government schools in Victoria had been very difficult to quantify. Most schools report that they have completed curriculum audits against the CSF, but the effectiveness of such audits, in particular whether they have led to any real change in the curriculum delivered by schools, has not been evaluated. It is, however, likely that the most significant curriculum change will be driven by new assessment and reporting requirements that are being placed on government schools. These requirements are discussed in greater detail below.

Both the Catholic and Independent school sectors were extensively involved in the consultation that followed the drafting of the CSF. The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) has 'noted the suitability of the CSF for implementation in Catholic schools' and has 'encouraged [teachers] to use it as a guide in their school-based program and lesson planning',[27] while the CECV Draft Report for 1995 notes that 'general curriculum development concentrated on the implementation of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* (CSF). During 1995, both primary and secondary schools carried out an extensive audit of their curriculum against the strands and sub-strands of the eight Key Learning Areas contained within the CSF.' Further, the Catholic Education Office funded the part-time work of a number of writers in some key learning areas to support the development of the 'Course Advice' materials by the Directorate of School Education, which is described in more detail below.

Implementation of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* in independent schools has largely been the product of professional development programs provided either through CSF teacher networks (see below for a more detailed description), subject associations or through the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria (AISV). For example, the AISV coordinated a pilot project funded through the National Professional Development Program (NPDP) which focused on 'school-based curriculum renewal with particular reference to the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* and its associated Key Learning Areas'. It is as yet too early to describe the impact of the development of the CSF on the curricula delivered by independent schools.

Support for the implementation of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework*

The introduction of the CSF has been supported by a very significant number of print resources produced by both the Directorate of School Education and the Board of Studies. There have been three factors that have driven this publishing explosion.

The first is that part of the Charter of the Board of Studies (BOS) is that it will 'develop exemplar courses' to 'improve the quality of curriculum programs to enhance learning outcomes'.

The second is a recognition on behalf of the DSE that schools do require considerable assistance to achieve the challenging task of the full and immediate implementation of an outcomes-based curriculum, assessment and reporting program with few if any precedents or examples of similar implementation on such a scale to turn to anywhere in the world.

The third is that the restructuring of the provision of local curriculum under the 'Schools of the Future' policy (outlined on the second page of this chapter) has meant the provision of support through print materials, perceived as a highly cost-effective means of support, has been given a high priority.

In addition to the generation of print materials, three other forms of support materials have been provided.

The first is satellite-transmitted education programs in the areas of Science, Technology, and LOTE. (This facility has also been used to provide curriculum information for teachers.) These are all produced by the DSE and are designed to provide all schools, particularly those in remote areas, with access to the kinds of teaching resources that will enable them to provide a more comprehensive curriculum than would otherwise be possible. The *Science and Technology Education in Primary Schools (STEPS)*[28] programs are transmitted on a fortnightly basis for Years P, 1-2, 3-4 and 5-6 students and teachers via the Directorate's Schools Of the Future satellite Network, SOFNet. The programs are linked to the CSF and accompanied by teaching support materials to assist teachers planning science and technology programs. The *Primary* and *Secondary Access to Languages via Satellite (PALS/SALS)*[29] programs are shown on SOFNet to primary and secondary schools. These programs aim to provide all Victorian students with continuity of and/or enrichment and extension of LOTE programs. PALS support materials are also developed in a range of languages for beginners and continuing learners in Years 3-6. SALS support materials are developed for Year 7 and Years 11-12 students. Interactive television programs are shown either twice weekly (Year 7) or weekly (Years 11-12).

The second is the establishment of CSF teacher networks within each administrative district across the state in each of the eight key learning areas. Network leaders have been appointed at a local level and funds have been provided by the Directorate to support network activities. NPDP funding was also used to facilitate networks in partnership with all sectors and many professional associations.

The third is the development of KIDMAP,[30] a computer software program designed to assist teachers plan an outcomes-based curriculum and then assess and record student progress against those outcomes. It has been provided to all government schools and all Catholic schools. (KIDMAP is discussed in more detail in the following section.)

A summary of all the resources related to the implementation of the CSF produced over the past eighteen months is summarised on a separate page in Figure 6.2. The following is a description of the print resources represented in the figure.[31]

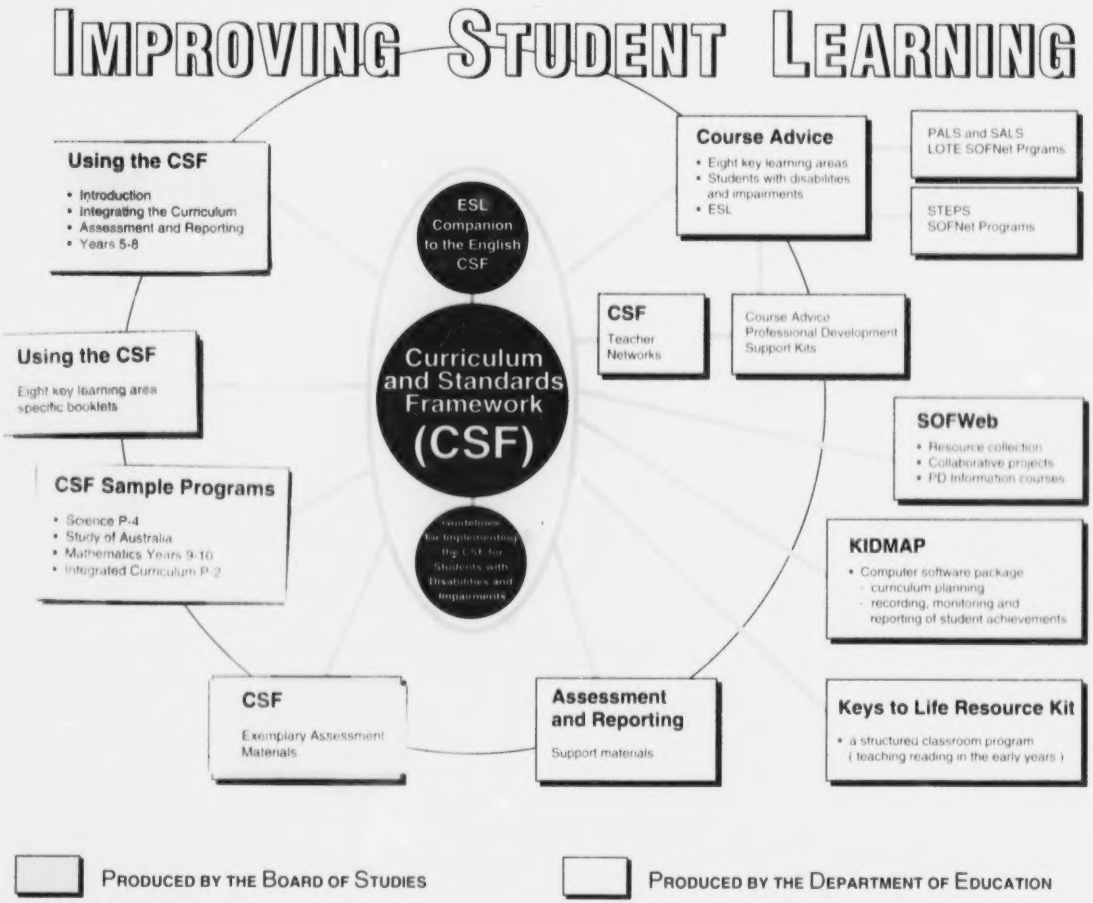
IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING
Using the CSF
• Introduction
• Integrating the Curriculum
• Assessment and Reporting
• Years 5-8
Using the CSF
Eight key learning area specific booklets
CSF Sample Programs
• Science P-4
• Study of Australia
• Mathematics Years 9-10
• Integrated Curriculum P-2
CSF
Exemplary Assessment Materials
ESL Companion to the English CSF
Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF)
Guidelines for Implementing the CSF for Students with Disabilities and Impairments
Assessment and Reporting
Support materials
Course Advice
• Eight key learning areas
• Students with disabilities and impairments
• ESL
PALS and SALS
LOTE SOFNet Prgrams
STEPS
SOFNet Programs
CSF
Teacher Networks
Course Advice
Professional Development
Support Kits
SOFWeb
• Resource collection
• Collaborative projects
• PD Information courses
KIDMAP
• Computer software package
- curriculum planning
- recording, monitoring and reporting of student achievements
Keys to Life Resource Kit
• a structured classroom program (teaching reading in the early years)
PRODUCED BY THE BOARD OF STUDIES
PRODUCED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Figure 6.2 Resource Materials Related to Implementation of the CSF

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Using the CSF (general) (BOS)

The Board published two general publications in 1995 under the *Using the CSF* title. The first, *An Introduction,*[32] focused on using the CSF to audit and review school programs. The second, *Integrating the Curriculum,*[33] included a range of examples of integrated approaches to curriculum planning which provide coverage of the CSF. A third volume on *Assessment and Reporting*[34] was distributed to schools in 1996. A fourth volume on Years 5-8 is planned for publication later in 1996.

Using the CSF: Key Learning Areas (BOS)[35]

Seven key learning area-specific guides to audit, review and planning have been published and distributed. (At the time of going to print, LOTE was still in preparation.) These publications concentrate on making links between the CSF and typical approaches to school curriculum programs in each of the key learning areas.

CSF Sample Programs (BOS)[36]

A guide to *Science Levels 1 - 4* has been published. This offers primary school teachers ideas on how to plan the science curriculum for their particular year level and as part of a balanced program across the school from Prep to Year 6. Mathematics Levels 6 - 7 has also been published. Two other similar publications are planned for other key learning areas, including a Study of Australia project which includes a 'Civics and citizenship' program related to Levels 4 to 7 of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework.*

Exemplary Assessment Materials (BOS)

The Board plans to produce later in 1996 exemplary assessment materials in a number of key learning areas. A document titled 'Mathematics Assessment Activities Using Number Tools and Procedures' has already been produced.[37] These materials are intended to be examples of methods which can be used to provide valid and reliable assessment of student achievements in relation to the CSF. Further similar publications related to the key learning area of Mathematics are planned.

Course Advice (DSE)

Course Advice documents have been and are being released to schools as they are completed. These documents have been developed by the DSE in conjunction with the non-government sector for each of the key learning areas and English as a Second Language. In addition, companion documents to the Course Advice focusing on students with disabilities and impairments are also being developed. *Course Advice PD Kits*[38] have been and will continue to be published to coincide with the distribution of Course Advice to schools.

The Course Advice materials are probably the most significant of all the forms of support offered to schools, certainly in terms of the ambitiousness of the project, the comprehensiveness of the material and the way in which the documents attempt to make the connection between the outcomes of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* and the classroom, and the thoroughness of the quality assurance mechanisms that guided the development of the materials. Some extracts are shown in Figures 6.3 to 6.5.

Each document consists of an introduction, which outlines the understandings on which the document is based, followed by sample units of work in a three column format. The columns are headed 'Suggested teaching and learning activities', 'Resources' (in the case of the primary English document this column is headed 'Language Focus' and in the secondary English document 'Aspects of Language') and 'Assessment Ideas'. 'ESL annotations' are provided in some of the sample units. These are 'designed to indicate the additional preparation or explanation that might be needed [for ESL students] and suggest approaches that are more helpful to ESL students learning in mainstream classes'.[39]

An additional project similar in conception to the Course Advice but with a more specific focus titled 'Understanding Australia' is also at present under production by the DSE. This material will take the form of two interactive multi-media CD-ROMs, one designed for use in primary schools and the other for secondary schools. Each is primarily based on the SOSE section of the CSF (but includes material related to the 'English and the Arts' key sections of the CSF) and outlines 'essential knowledge about Australia's history, geography, economic, political and legal systems and culture'.

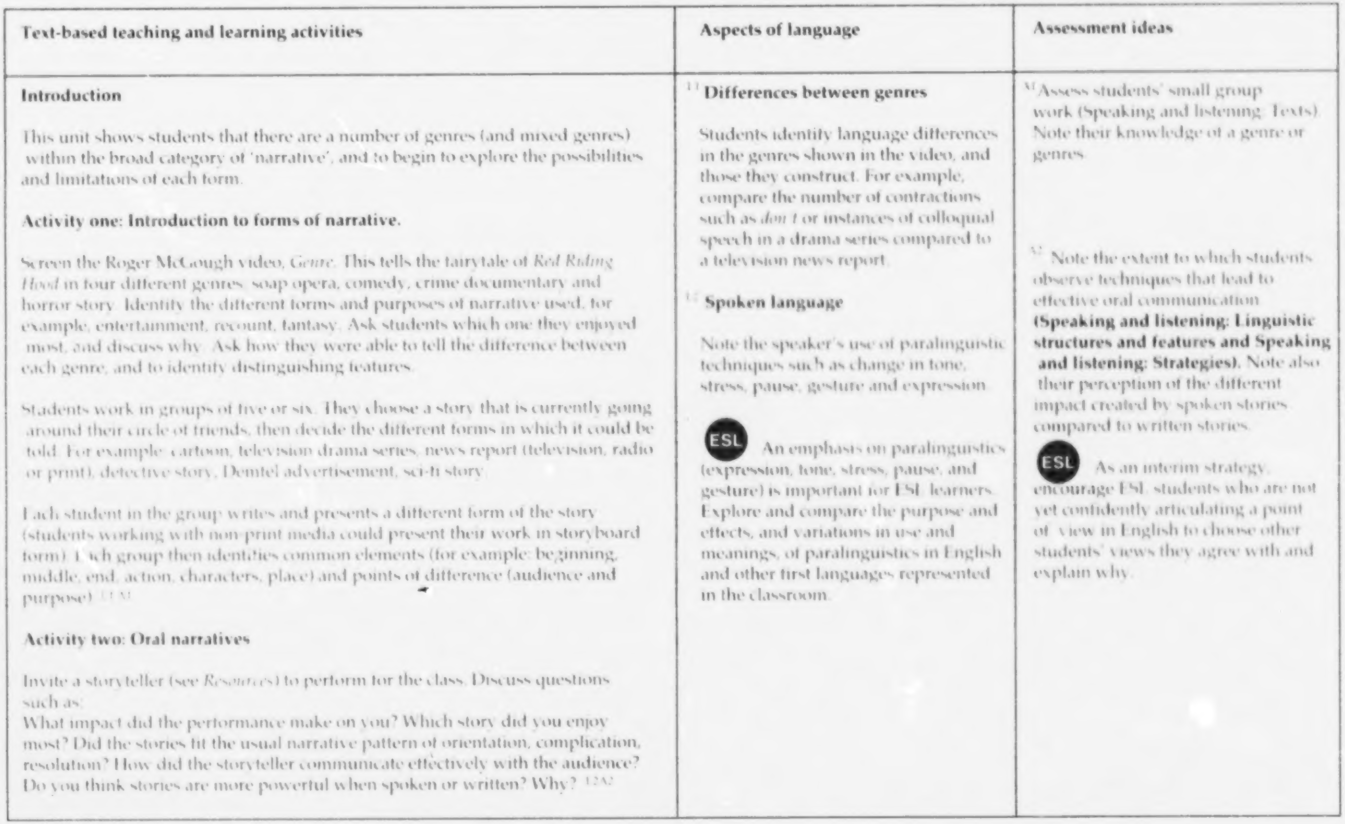
Assessment and Reporting Support Materials (DSE)

A package of support materials is currently under development to support schools in assessing and reporting on student learning progress. It draws on the BOS assessment and reporting advice but focuses on the particular reporting requirements mandated by the DSE (this is discussed in more detail in the next section). The kit contains general advice on approaches to outcomes-based assessment and reporting and includes sample report formats.

Assessment and reporting against the CSF

The real impetus for the implementation of the CSF, as perhaps was inevitable, has come from assessment and reporting policies and practices. Four related but distinct sets of guidelines and resources related to assessing and reporting student achievement against the outcome statements of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* have evolved in Victoria:

- the guidelines on assessment and reporting issued to all schools by the Victorian Board of Studies;
- the advice on assessment and reporting distributed by the Victorian Directorate of School Education to all Government schools;
- the development and promotion of KIDMAP software;
- the introduction of the Learning Assessment Project.



Text-based teaching and learning activities	Aspects of language	Assessment ideas
Introduction This unit shows students that there are a number of genres (and mixed genres) within the broad category of 'narrative', and to begin to explore the possibilities and limitations of each form. **Activity one: Introduction to forms of narrative.** Screen the Roger McGough video, *Genre*. This tells the fairytale of *Red Riding Hood* in four different genres: soap opera, comedy, crime documentary and horror story. Identify the different forms and purposes of narrative used, for example, entertainment, recount, fantasy. Ask students which one they enjoyed most, and discuss why. Ask how they were able to tell the difference between each genre, and to identify distinguishing features. Students work in groups of five or six. They choose a story that is currently going around their circle of friends, then decide the different forms in which it could be told. For example: cartoon, television drama series, news report (television, radio or print), detective story, Demtel advertisement, sci-fi story. Each student in the group writes and presents a different form of the story (students working with non-print media could present their work in storyboard form). Each group then identifies common elements (for example: beginning, middle, end, action, characters, place) and points of difference (audience and purpose). [L1 S1] **Activity two: Oral narratives** Invite a storyteller (see *Resources*) to perform for the class. Discuss questions such as: What impact did the performance make on you? Which story did you enjoy most? Did the stories fit the usual narrative pattern of orientation, complication, resolution? How did the storyteller communicate effectively with the audience? Do you think stories are more powerful when spoken or written? Why? [L2 S2]	[L1] **Differences between genres** Students identify language differences in the genres shown in the video, and those they construct. For example, compare the number of contractions such as *don't* or instances of colloquial speech in a drama series compared to a television news report. [L2] **Spoken language** Note the speaker's use of paralinguistic techniques such as change in tone, stress, pause, gesture and expression. ESL An emphasis on paralinguistics (expression, tone, stress, pause, and gesture) is important for ESL learners. Explore and compare the purpose and effects, and variations in use and meanings, of paralinguistics in English and other first languages represented in the classroom.	[S1] Assess students' small group work (Speaking and listening: Texts). Note their knowledge of a genre or genres. [S2] Note the extent to which students observe techniques that lead to effective oral communication **(Speaking and listening: Linguistic structures and features and Speaking and listening: Strategies)**. Note also their perception of the different impact created by spoken stories compared to written stories. ESL As an interim strategy, encourage ESL students who are not yet confidently articulating a point of view in English to choose other students' views they agree with and explain why.

Figure 6.3 *Course Advice* Sample Page, English

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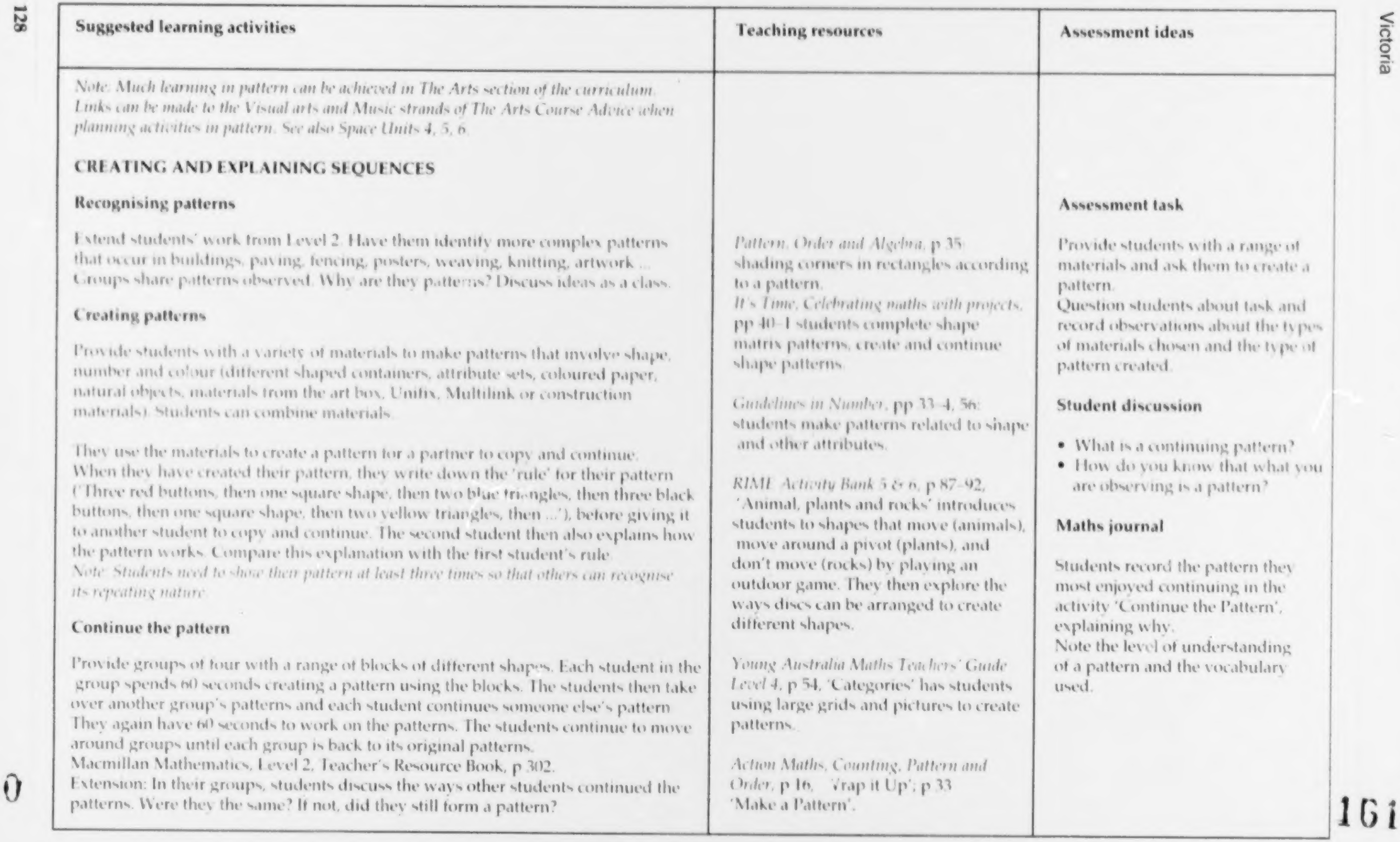
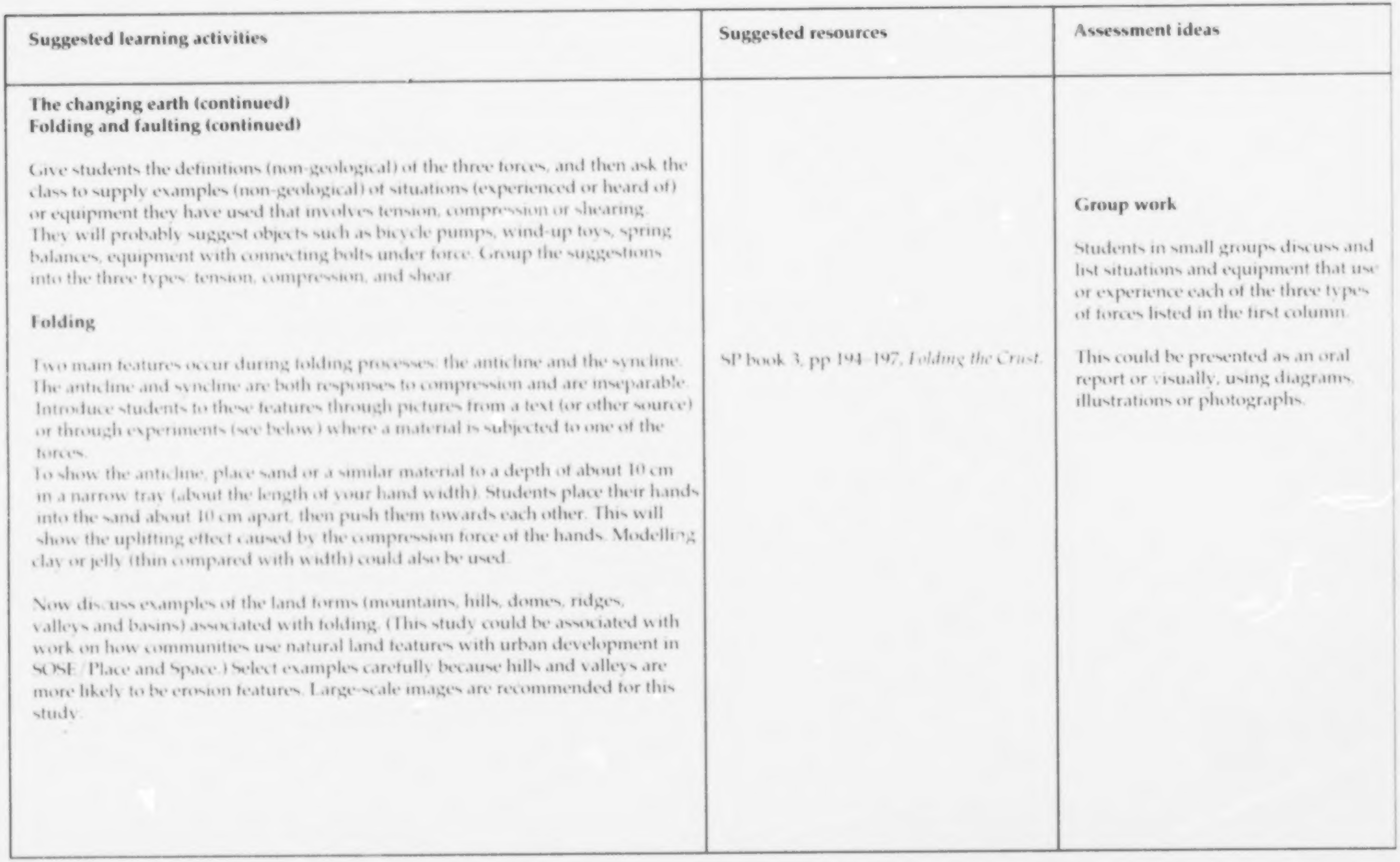


Suggested learning activities	Teaching resources	Assessment ideas
Note: Much learning in pattern can be achieved in The Arts section of the curriculum. Links can be made to the Visual arts and Music strands of The Arts Course Advice when planning activities in pattern. See also Space Units 4, 5, 6. **CREATING AND EXPLAINING SEQUENCES** **Recognising patterns** Extend students' work from Level 2. Have them identify more complex patterns that occur in buildings, paving, fencing, posters, weaving, knitting, artwork ... Groups share patterns observed. Why are they patterns? Discuss ideas as a class. **Creating patterns** Provide students with a variety of materials to make patterns that involve shape, number and colour (different shaped containers, attribute sets, coloured paper, natural objects, materials from the art box, Unifix, Multilink or construction materials). Students can combine materials. They use the materials to create a pattern for a partner to copy and continue. When they have created their pattern, they write down the 'rule' for their pattern ('Three red buttons, then one square shape, then two blue triangles, then three black buttons, then one square shape, then two yellow triangles, then ...'), before giving it to another student to copy and continue. The second student then also explains how the pattern works. Compare this explanation with the first student's rule. *Note: Students need to show their pattern at least three times so that others can recognise its repeating nature.* **Continue the pattern** Provide groups of four with a range of blocks of different shapes. Each student in the group spends 60 seconds creating a pattern using the blocks. The students then take over another group's patterns and each student continues someone else's pattern. They again have 60 seconds to work on the patterns. The students continue to move around groups until each group is back to its original patterns. Macmillan Mathematics, Level 2, Teacher's Resource Book, p 302. Extension: In their groups, students discuss the ways other students continued the patterns. Were they the same? If not, did they still form a pattern?	*Pattern, Order and Algebra*, p 35: shading corners in rectangles according to a pattern. *It's Time, Celebrating maths with projects*, pp 40–1 students complete shape matrix patterns, create and continue shape patterns. *Guidelines in Number*, pp 33–4, 56: students make patterns related to shape and other attributes. *RIME Activity Bank 5 & 6*, p 87–92, 'Animal, plants and rocks' introduces students to shapes that move (animals), move around a pivot (plants), and don't move (rocks) by playing an outdoor game. They then explore the ways discs can be arranged to create different shapes. *Young Australia Maths Teachers' Guide Level 4*, p 54, 'Categories' has students using large grids and pictures to create patterns. *Action Maths, Counting, Pattern and Order*, p 16, 'Wrap it Up'; p 33 'Make a Pattern'.	**Assessment task** Provide students with a range of materials and ask them to create a pattern. Question students about task and record observations about the types of materials chosen and the type of pattern created. **Student discussion** • What is a continuing pattern? • How do you know that what you are observing is a pattern? **Maths journal** Students record the pattern they most enjoyed continuing in the activity 'Continue the Pattern', explaining why. Note the level of understanding of a pattern and the vocabulary used.

Figure 6.4 *Course Advice* Sample Page, Mathematics



Suggested learning activities	**Suggested resources**	**Assessment ideas**
The changing earth (continued) **Folding and faulting (continued)** Give students the definitions (non-geological) of the three forces, and then ask the class to supply examples (non-geological) of situations (experienced or heard of) or equipment they have used that involves tension, compression or shearing. They will probably suggest objects such as bicycle pumps, wind-up toys, spring balances, equipment with connecting bolts under force. Group the suggestions into the three types: tension, compression, and shear.		**Group work** Students in small groups discuss and list situations and equipment that use or experience each of the three types of forces listed in the first column.
Folding Two main features occur during folding processes: the anticline and the syncline. The anticline and syncline are both responses to compression and are inseparable. Introduce students to these features through pictures from a text (or other source) or through experiments (see below) where a material is subjected to one of the forces. To show the anticline, place sand or a similar material to a depth of about 10 cm in a narrow tray (about the length of your hand width). Students place their hands into the sand about 10 cm apart, then push them towards each other. This will show the uplifting effect caused by the compression force of the hands. Modelling clay or jelly (thin compared with width) could also be used. Now discuss examples of the land forms (mountains, hills, domes, ridges, valleys and basins) associated with folding. (This study could be associated with work on how communities use natural land features with urban development in SOSE/Place and Space.) Select examples carefully because hills and valleys are more likely to be erosion features. Large-scale images are recommended for this study.	SP book 3, pp 194–197, *Folding the Crust*.	This could be presented as an oral report or visually, using diagrams, illustrations or photographs.

Figure 6.5 *Course Advice* Sample Page, Studies of Society and Environment

As outlined in the previous section, in early 1996 the Board of Studies issued to all schools a publication titled *Using the CSF: Assessment and Reporting*. Its purpose was to 'help teachers and schools develop assessment and reporting procedures consistent with the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* through the provision of 'operating principles' and examples of assessment and reporting processes.[40] The most significant of the principles articulated in this document can be summarised as follows:

- Student achievement is best reported on the basis of levels and strands rather than either individual outcomes or the whole key learning area. The rationale provided is that 'the generality of whole key learning areas as a focus for reporting risks concealing useful information. On the other hand, reporting on the detail of individual learning outcomes would risk overwhelming the reader with excessive information, not easily interpreted'.[41] The document clearly signals a move away from a focus on individual outcomes to 'tasks which provide information on multiple outcomes', emphasising that describing student achievement in terms of a level, 'does not mean ... that each outcome needs to be assessed discretely';[42]
- Assessment of achievement of outcomes will be on the basis of 'on-balance' judgements made by teachers on the basis of a range of information;
- Key issues in using the CSF outcomes as the basis for assessment and reporting include developing consistency in assessment decisions across different classes, schools and regions.

The first of these points is perhaps the most important, for it signals an approach to using outcomes that is at odds with many commercial text books and record-keeping software programs appearing in the Victorian education market that claim to be based on the CSF. Many of these books and programs encourage teachers to use the outcomes as a checklist by relating a particular task to a particular outcome at a set level and then providing teachers with the facility to 'tick off' this outcome once the student completes the task, and to mark in the date (the singular form is significant) when the teacher 'observed' that outcome. The assumption underlying this approach is that once a student has 'done' a task they have 'shown' an outcome. The Board is instead encouraging teachers, particularly in KLAs such as Mathematics which are perhaps most susceptible to a 'checklist approach' due to the huge number of very specific outcomes, to develop what it has termed 'rich assessment tasks' which enable students to demonstrate a range of outcomes from a range of levels through the same task depending on their skill and knowledge. An example of this approach is the Board document titled *Mathematics Assessment Activities using Number Tools and Procedures*.[43]

The advice on assessment and reporting issued to all Government schools in Victoria by the DSE endorsed these principles established by the Board, and mandated certain reporting requirements. A memorandum issued to principals of all government schools on 24 June 1996 set down that the reporting of student achievement to parents against the CSF in KLAs other than English and mathematics should occur by the end of 1997. In a statement that significantly broadens the use of outcomes beyond their relevance to individual student learning, the memorandum established that

> reporting [CSF] levels of student achievement though the annual report is an important aspect of a school's accountability to its community and to the DSE.

The memorandum further advised that

> schools should plan to include information about student achievement in KLAs other than English and Mathematics in their annual reports on a cyclical basis and in accordance with the priorities in their [School] Charters.[44]

This reporting will take the form of aggregated data in which student achievement on CSF levels in English and mathematics will be represented as a proportion of student numbers at each year level. Degrees of achievement within each CSF level will be reported on in school annual reports using the following four-point scale:

1 = The student has *established* the skill and knowledge level and consistently exhibits all or most of the behaviours in the level in a range of contexts.

2 = The student is *consolidating* the skill and knowledge, such that some, but not all of the behaviours for the level are often exhibited, e.g. where students display such learning with assistance, or only in similar tasks.

3 = The student is *beginning* to show signs of the skills, knowledge or behaviour pattern of the level, in that only a little of the pattern is shown, e.g. where students occasionally, and with assistance, demonstrate the learning.

4 = Progress is *not apparent*. The student shows none of the skills, knowledge or behaviours of the level, e.g. where no evidence of progress in this level has been observed or the student is not participating in learning activities.

In a significant statement, however, the 'Overview' section of the *Assessment and Reporting Support Materials* provided by the Department of School Education states that

> in reporting student progress to parents it may not be appropriate to use the '4' or 'Not apparent' rating which simply indicates that no learning has taken place at the specified CSF level. It would be more useful to report the student's learning progress at the relevant CSF level.[45]

The advice provided specifically in relation to the English KLA in the *English* section of the *Assessment and Reporting Support Materials* is stronger:

> it will almost never be appropriate to use the 'Not apparent' marker ... If a students is not achieving at the expected level, teachers should look at the outcome statements both below and above the expected level, in conjunction with the scale of 'Established', 'Consolidating' or 'Beginning', to find the most accurate indicator of student achievement.[46]

The significance of this statement lies in the way it supports the attempts by the Board of Studies to encourage schools and teachers to use the outcome statements of the CSF as a continuum or developmental map of achievement whenever possible. Anecdotal evidence from consultants employed by schools to provide advice on assessment and reporting is that one of the unintended and unwelcome consequences in Victoria of both the linkage of the CSF levels with year levels of schooling, and the introduction of the four-point scale, is that it has positioned teachers to read the outcome statements for particular levels as self-contained descriptors of the learning students will demonstrate when in a particular year level. This is both reflected in and promulgated by the kind of commercial publications mentioned earlier.

The advice to schools from the DSE emphasises that outcomes are to be used to make a judgement about the kind of skills students have demonstrated on the basis of tasks they complete, not on the basis of pre-emptive predictions made by teachers. Schools are advised that in order to make reliable judgements about student achievement teachers should:

- collect a variety of evidence of students demonstrating learning outcomes using a range of assessment strategies;
- make judgements about whether students have demonstrated learning outcomes taking in to account the range of contexts, frequency, consistency and degree of independence associated with the student demonstrating the outcome;
- make an on-balance summative judgement about each student's achievement in terms of the CSF strands, modes and levels based on their demonstration of learning outcomes.[47]

A further interesting development in the area of assessment and reporting has come with the completion of the draft *Companion to the English Course Advice - Students with Disabilities and Impairments* document.[48] The emphasis of this document is on both the need for teachers to provide an 'age-appropriate' curriculum for students with disabilities and impairments and to use the English section of the CSF in a positive way to facilitate this. The document anticipates arguments that will be put in opposition to this view:

> There is sometimes a view that many students with disabilities or impairments have such limited means of communication that a framework that incorporates six levels is inappropriate.

The document argues that for students with disabilities or impairments the emphasis should be on using the levels of the CSF to construct an age-appropriate curriculum which allows at least for the 'partial participation' of students with disabilities or impairments in the activities typical of those in which other students are involved. The document recognises that 'a proportion of ... students would not be expected to pursue any outcomes in particular modes such as writing or speaking' but also suggests that '[students] with more severe disabilities will participate partially by achieving components of outcomes in modified conditions'.

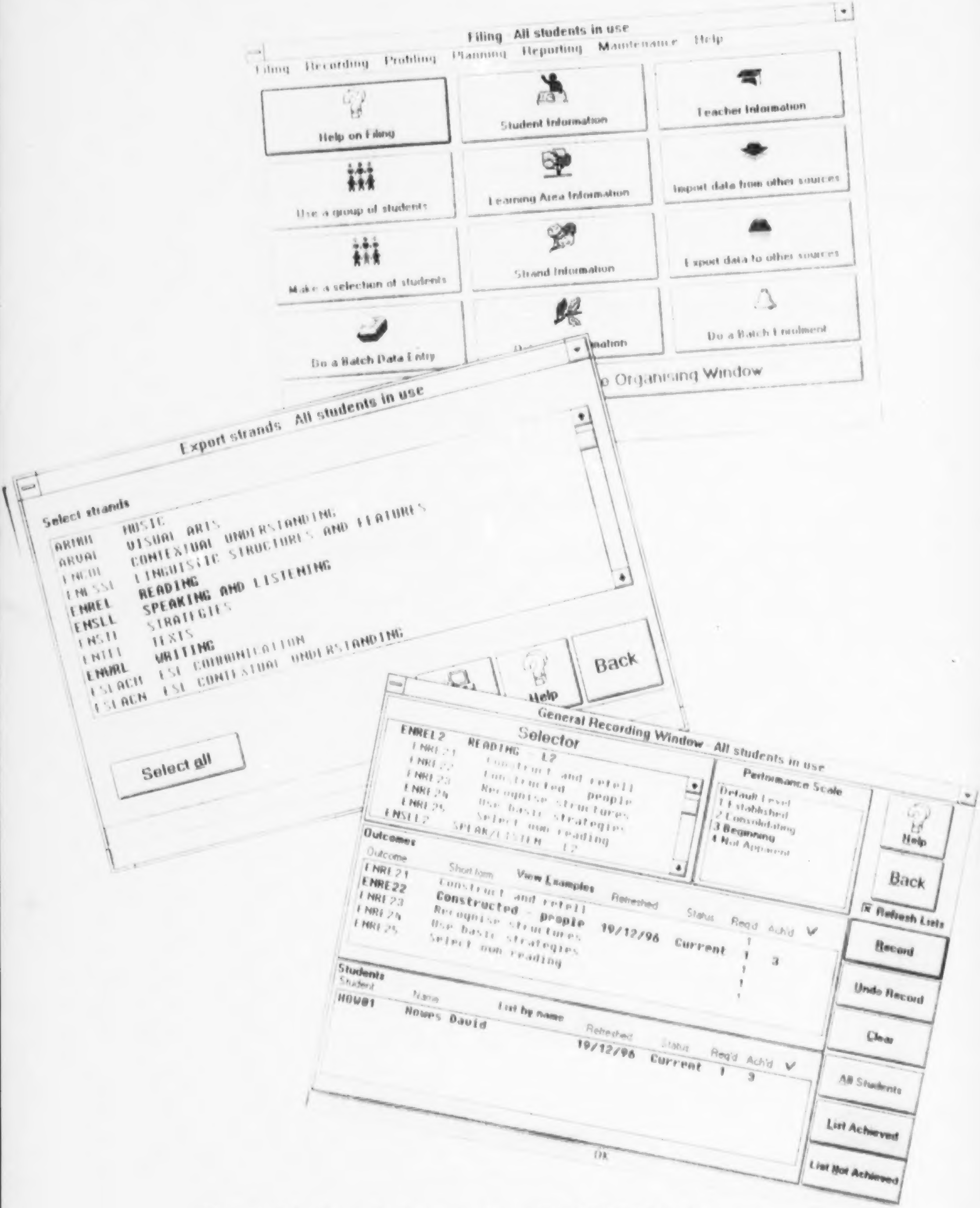
This offers a positive and creative option for teachers who want to acknowledge the capacities and achievements of students, but who feel the outcome statements do not allow them to do so. The introduction of this concept of 'partial achievement of outcomes' may prove to be a significant contribution to the question of how best to assess and report on the work of students with disabilities or impairments.

One of the key aspects of evaluating the implementation of the CSF will be to investigate the way in which teachers and schools have read the outcome statements in the context of assessing and reporting student achievement. The ongoing development of the software program KIDMAP may well have a significant impact on this. KIDMAP is a computer software program designed to assist teachers and schools to record student progress against a developmental progress map in the form of outcome statements, such as the CSF. The developers of the program argue that KIDMAP should not be seen merely as a recording tool, a kind of 'electronic markbook', but rather seen as a resource for a wide variety of tasks including storage of student biographical data (such as age, gender, NESB background, Aboriginality and economic status), curriculum planning, storage and retrieval of lesson plans, diagnostic notes on individual student's learning, the production of reports to parents on student progress, the production of aggregated data to allow schools to identify and compare the records of cohorts of students (for example, girls of NESB backgrounds compared to girls of non-NESB backgrounds) in forms such as graphs as well as figures, and the production of data in the form required for school annual reports. Some examples of screens from KIDMAP are shown on the following page.

While the Curriculum Corporation has 'exclusively endorsed KIDMAP as the software carrier of the Curriculum Profiles for Australian schools', it is the Victorian Government which has most enthusiastically promoted KIDMAP and supported its development, investing over one million dollars since 1993.

In 1995, the Victorian Government and the Victorian Catholic Education Office provided KIDMAP software pre-loaded with the outcomes of the CSF to all schools in their respective sectors together with support materials including print guides, on-screen tutorials and access to a Helpline. Training of District Support Staff for schools was carried out throughout 1995-96 and five training videos were screened on the DSE's Interactive Satellite Learning Network. There has been no actual or foreshadowed directive from the Victorian Government or the CEO that requires schools to use KIDMAP for assessment or reporting purposes, but encouragement for schools to use KIDMAP is evident from the degree of support provided.

It is as yet too early to quantify accurately the uptake of KIDMAP by schools and teachers and to describe the way it is being used. One of the developments currently being undertaken, however, is to explore ways in which KIDMAP might be set up to encourage teachers to use the outcome statements of the CSF, not as a checklist, but rather as a tool to assist in the planning of curriculum and the diagnostic evaluation of student work.


Filing All students in use
Filing
Recording
Profiling
Planning
Reporting
Maintenance
Help
Help on Filing
Student Information
Teacher Information
Use a group of students
Learning Area Information
Import data from other sources
Make a selection of students
Strand Information
Export data to other sources
Do a Batch Data Entry
Do a Batch Enrolment
Organising Window
Export strands All students in use
Select strands
Select all
Help
Back
General Recording Window All students in use
Selector
Performance Scale
Outcomes
Students
Help
Back
☒ Refresh Lists
Record
Undo Record
Clear
All Students
List Achieved
List Not Achieved

ARMU MUSIC
ARVA VISUAL ARTS
ENCU CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING
ENLSS LINGUISTIC STRUCTURES AND FEATURES
ENREL READING
ENSLL SPEAKING AND LISTENING
ENSTI STRATEGIES
ENTEL TEXTS
ENWRL WRITING
ESLACH ESL COMMUNICATION
ESLACN ESL CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING

ENREL2 READING - L2
ENRE21 Construct and retell
ENRE22 Constructed - people
ENRE23 Recognise structures
ENRE24 Use basic strategies
ENRE25 Select own reading
ENSLL2 SPEAK/LISTEN - L2

Default Level
1 Established
2 Consolidating
3 Beginning
4 Not Apparent

Outcome	Short form	Refreshed	Status	Req'd	Ach'd	✓
ENRE21	Construct and retell			1		
ENRE22	**Constructed - people**	**19/12/96**	**Current**	1	3	
ENRE23	Recognise structures			1		
ENRE24	Use basic strategies			1		
ENRE25	Select own reading			1		

View Examples

Student	Name	Refreshed	Status	Req'd	Ach'd	✓
HOW01	Howes David	19/12/96	Current	1	3	

List by name

OK

Figure 6.6 Sample Screens from the KIDMAP Program

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In addition to this program of school-based assessment, the Government introduced the Learning Assessment Project (LAP) in November 1994, a state-wide standardised testing program, initially in the key learning areas of English and mathematics, that is intended to be linked to those sections of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework.*

The rationale for the LAP (as it has become known) was set out in a letter from the Minister for Education to the Board of Studies in March 1994:

> When I transmitted to the Board of Studies its charter, I stated that one of the principles that should guide the Board is [that] 'students and their parents should be provided with detailed, valid and reliable information concerning individual achievement and progress'.
>
> To address this part of the charter ... I request the Board to co-ordinate a project which will consider and make recommendations to me on an appropriate program of assessment designed to evaluate levels of students achievement.
>
> For this program to be of maximum benefit to students, teachers and parents I believe that it should be administered at least twice in a primary school student's time at school'.[49]

The development of the program was rapid indeed, to the extent that on the 24 November 1994 the Chairperson and CEO of the Board communicated to school principals that the Minister had endorsed the decision of the Board that an assessment program would begin in 1995.[50] It would address Levels 2 and 3 of the CSF for Year 3 students (with a lesser emphasis on Levels 1 and 4) and Levels 3 and 4 of the CSF for year 5 students (with a lesser emphasis on Levels 2 and 5). In 1995 the LAP would be based on the English (Reading, Writing and Listening modes) and Mathematics (Number, Measurement and Space strands) sections of the CSF. They indicated that each year after 1995 the English modes and Mathematics strands would continue to be assessed (though different areas of mathematics would be assessed each year) and one other key learning area would be part of the LAP. The timetable set out was as follows:

- 1996 Science
- 1997 Studies of Societies and Environment
- 1998 Health and Physical Education
- 1999 The Arts
- 2000 Technology.

Victorian school principals are obliged to provide students with the opportunity to complete the LAP, though in some circumstances students may be granted an exemption. Principals may grant exemptions to students with disabilities and impairments and to students who have been learning English in Australia for less than two years. According to Board of Studies figures, in 1996 the LAP was undertaken by 93 per cent of eligible students. Of this figure, 73.8 per cent were students from government schools, 22.7 per cent from Catholic schools and 3.5 per cent from independent schools.

The LAP program has been criticised by professional teacher associations, teacher unions and some parent groups. It appears, however, that acceptance of and support for the LAP program, particularly among parents, is increasing.

A further development to the LAP program has been the announcement from the new Minister for Education, Phil Gude, in May 1996, that he has asked the Board of Studies to recommend an appropriate statewide assessment of secondary students in key learning areas. The Minister has asked the Board to provide recommendations in the following areas:

- which key learning areas should be assessed and at what year level;
- an appropriate program of assessment for junior secondary students, focussing on basic skills, key competencies and higher order cognitive skills;
- an appropriate program of assessment and counselling at the end of a student's compulsory school years;
- formats for reporting the results to students and parents;
- procedures to help schools monitor and improve their performance.

The kind of assessment program that might be proposed by the Board of Studies is yet to be determined.

A related component of the LAP project has been the development and publication of 'Exemplary Assessment Material' in the area of Science by the Board of Studies. This document provides formal assessment strategies related to the Science section of the CSF. Similar publications in other KLAs are planned.

Future issues in the implementation of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework*

There will be five areas that will receive emphasis in the immediate future in relation to the implementation of the *Curriculum and Standards Framework*. While the emphasis will initially be within the Department of Education and in government schools, these issues will inevitably arise also for those schools in the non-government sector who wish to use the CSF as their framework for curriculum delivery.

The first is the development by schools and local regions of processes for ensuring consistency of judgements by teachers of levels of achievement through continuing resourcing of local teacher networks.

The second is the revision of the CSF, in particular to take account of the changes that technology is bringing to both the content and process of a number of key learning areas and the pedagogies that are associated with each. This has already been set in train through a letter from the Minister for Education to the Chairperson of the Board of Studies requesting that by the end of 1996 the Board 'review the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* to ensure that the content, skills and learning outcomes related to the use of information technology are appropriately addressed across all key learning areas of the CSF'. Further in his letter, the Minister indicated that 'one possible outcome of this review may be the publication of supplementary advice to schools concerning the knowledge, competencies and standards required by students in the use of information technology as they progress through the levels of the CSF'.

The third is the development, particularly at the early years of schooling, of teaching and learning programs which provide a comprehensive and integrated coverage of the eight key learning areas but which also retain a focus on developing key skills in the areas of literacy and numeracy.

The fourth is the development of professional development programs for school leadership teams that will improve the capacity of schools to draw upon the range of resources now available to support the implementation of the CSF.

The fifth is the question of evaluation, namely, to what extent has the introduction of the CSF and the wealth of associated support materials led to an improvement in student learning?

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[4] Department of School Education (School Improvement Branch), Mathematics Profiles Handbook Number and Space (Draft version), Author, Melbourne, Victoria, 1992.

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[7] C. J. Marsh, *Producing a National Curriculum: Plans and Paranoia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1994, p. 171.

[8] Directorate of School Education, *Course Advice*, Author, Melbourne, Victoria, 1996.

[9] Board of Studies, *Curriculum and Standards Framework*, Author, Melbourne, Victoria, 1995, p. iii.

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[11] Office of the Minister for Education, News Release, 2 July 1993.

[12] Office of the Minister for Education, 1993.

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[20] Board of Studies, *Curriculum and Standards Framework*, 1995, p. 10.

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[23] Mayer Committee, *Putting General Education to Work: The Key Competencies Report*, Australian Education Council and Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training, Melbourne, 1992.

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[25] Board of Studies, 1996, p. 9.

[26] Board of Studies, 1996, p. 10.

[27] Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) Report, Melbourne, Victoria, 1994, p. 18.

[28] Department of Education, *Science and Technology Education in Primary Schools (STEPS)* television programs. For further information, see Department of Education website at www.dse.vic.gov.au/steps

[29] Department of Education, *Primary/Secondary Access of Languages via Satellite (PALS/SALS)*. For further information, contact Anne Eckstein on +61 3 9628 2547.

[30] Mercator Software Pty Ltd, KIDMAP 96.1, Author, Perth, Western Australia, 1996.

[31] The graphic and some of the descriptions of the resources are from *Victorian School News* 9/5/1996, p. 11.

[32] Board of Studies, *Using the CSF: An Introduction*, Author, Melbourne, Victoria, 1995.

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[35] Board of Studies, *Using the CSF: Key Learning Areas*, Author, Melbourne, Victoria, 1995.

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[37] Department of School Education, 1992 (see Note 4).

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[40] Board of Studies, *Using the CSF: Assessment and Reporting*, 1996 p. 1.

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[45] Department of Education, Overview, in *Assessment and Reporting Support Materials*, Author, Melbourne, Victoria, 1996, p. 7.

[46] Department of Education, English, in *Assessment and Reporting Support Materials*, Author, Melbourne, Victoria, 1996, p. 7.

[47] Department of Education, English, in *Assessment and Reporting Support Materials*, 1996, p. 7.

[48] Department of Education, *Companion to the English Course Advice - Students with Disabilities and Impairments*, Author, Melbourne, Victoria, 1996.

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7 Use of National Statements and Profiles in Queensland Schools

Neville Grace
Christine Ludwig

Two decisions made in the early 1990s by the Australian Education Council (AEC) have had a significant impact on recent school-level curriculum development in Queensland. One was the decision in 1991 that curriculum statements and profiles would be developed for each of eight broad learning areas. The other was the decision in mid 1993 to refer the by now completed draft documents back to the states for review, rather than adopt them as national education policy. The background to these decisions and the documents themselves are described in the first chapter of this book.

The national statements and accompanying profiles influenced Queensland education mostly in the learning areas of English and mathematics. What follows is an historical account of the attempts to accommodate the English and mathematics statements and profiles in Queensland schools. One feature of the account is the relationship between national and state initiatives with respect to outcomes-based education, especially as this relates to the development and implementation of the *English in Years 1 to 10 Queensland syllabus materials,*[1] and the development, trial and revision of Student Performance Standards (SPS) in English. A second feature of the account is the story of interactions among political, industrial and curriculum development forces during the trial and partial implementation of outcomes-based reporting in mathematics up to the end of 1995. Some implications of outcomes-based education for learning, teaching, assessing and reporting in mathematics and English are also considered at various stages in this historical overview. Very little reference will be made to the other six learning areas as, apart from limited distribution of the national statements and profiles and some awareness raising, no work has been done in Queensland towards implementation.

The years prior to 1991

In Queensland, there had been a long history of emphasis on 'inputs' in curriculum documents. Exit certification at the end of Year 10 was the province of a statutory body, the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies. Assessment and reporting at other stages throughout the compulsory years of education were seen to be the responsibility of the school and the classroom teacher. In the years prior to 1991, English and mathematics syllabuses did not include information about expected outcomes, although in English descriptions of outcomes were being explored.

However, this situation was undergoing a major change. In *Focus on Schools*, public accountability was identified as one organisational principle underlying the restructured Department of Education.[2] The coordinated development of student performance standards was listed as one of the main functions of the Studies Directorate.

... *in English*

In Queensland, English syllabus development for the compulsory years of schooling, that is Years 1 to 10, had been ongoing since the early 1980s. In 1987 drafts of early proposals for the English syllabus were distributed to specific groups, including regionally selected schools, for comment. By 1991, a draft Years 1 to 10 English Language Arts Syllabus was being readied for publication. At the same time, the Curriculum and Assessment Committee (CURASS) of the AEC assumed responsibilities 'for consultation and for the progressive approval, through consensus, of draft statements and profiles'.[3] This situation of concurrent development had many effects on English curriculum development at the state level and these will be discussed in the historical overview that follows.

... *in mathematics*

The situation for mathematics was quite different. A syllabus and accompanying guidelines for Years 1 to 10 had been recently published.[4,5] A set of year level sourcebooks for teachers was prepared progressively and distributed during 1987 to 1994. These materials had a significant influence on the writers of the national mathematics statement. For example, the list of 'affects' from the Queensland syllabus was incorporated almost word for word in the section on 'attitudes and appreciations' in the national statement. The two sets of documents were not mirror images in any sense but there was certainly a great deal of congruence among them in terms of purpose and sequence even though the content organisers were quite different.

Thus a recently developed and comprehensive set of mathematics materials existed as 'givens' for curriculum development in Queensland, but they made no reference to expected outcomes. Subsequent negotiations, at least as far as state schools were concerned, related only to the use of the national profile as a basis for reporting on student achievement.

1991

... *in English*

In 1991, the *Years 1 to 10 English Language Arts* draft materials were distributed to all government schools (primary, secondary, special and distance education) for feedback, which was collected until 1993. During this time, all teachers were given an opportunity to participate in English Language Arts professional development. Key teachers were appointed in schools and educational advisers in regions to support the development of School English Programs. The planning process encapsulated in the development of these programs was not only essential as the first stage in syllabus implementation but also provided feedback to inform the final writing of the syllabus. A trial syllabus implementation was also conducted by the Queensland University of Technology and the outcomes were noted to inform further developments.

1992

In June 1992, the Queensland government announced that performance standards would be introduced in mathematics and English and that reporting on student achievement in these two learning areas would begin in 1994.

With hindsight, it is clear that there was little real agreement among the key players as to just what was meant by performance standards. The term was expanded to 'Student Performance Standards', or SPS, during 1992. At the governmental level, there is evidence of a belief that the determination of standards would be based upon some form of 'test'. At the level of curriculum developers within the Department of Education, there was debate and gradual growth of consensus about what 'performance standards' might mean and about the principles necessary for their use in schools. One author who has studied the process in detail described the growth as occurring through stages of uncertainty, clarification, confusion and resolution.[6]

Despite the uncertainty and lack of fundamental agreement that existed in mid 1992, the Department of Education was asked to prepare information brochures for schools and parents. In the absence of any sets of standards in Queensland, a decision was made to use extracts from the national materials which at that stage had neither been completed nor agreed to by the states and territories. The brochure contained the following footnotes to explain the extracts chosen and these indicate the tentative nature of the whole enterprise at that time:

Footnote to mathematics extracts:

Source: *Mathematics Profiles, Levels 1-6 (Draft, 1992)*, based on *A National Statement on Mathematics for Australian Schools*, Curriculum Corporation, 1990, developed for the Australian Education Council for consideration by all state education systems.[7]

Footnote to English extracts:

Note: These are extracts from the *South Australian Attainment Levels in English language* ... Those writing the Queensland Performance Standards are referring to these descriptors ...[8]

... in mathematics

The brochure also stated some intentions about standards development in mathematics that implied that plans were actually in place. The brochure claimed:

> Queensland Performance Standards will relate closely to the national profiles of student achievement, but they will take particular account of our syllabus documents and of the diversity of our educational settings and students ... Presently, a range of Queensland schools is involved in developing Queensland profiles which will be compatible with national profiles ... the standards will be developed in 1992, formally trialed in 1993, and implemented in all schools from 1994.[9]

The timelines did not allow for any such development and it was recognised within the Department of Education that the enormously complex task of developing a special Queensland version of the standards could not possibly be carried out in the latter half of 1992 ready for trial in 1993. A recommendation was therefore made that, since there was reasonable congruence between the national mathematics profile (still in draft form at that stage) and the Queensland curriculum materials, the national document should be used without change in order to meet the timeline imposed.

... in English

When the draft English syllabus was first distributed in 1991 it did not yet contain information about outcomes-based standards. However, as Queensland had an already well developed draft syllabus, it was in a position to move towards specifying standards based on that syllabus. At the state level, it became a priority to include a draft of outcomes-based standards as part of the syllabus. Those involved in the development believed, at that stage, that the task could be carried out in time for implementation in 1994 to meet the timeline established by the government.

As work began on the formulation of standards, concerns about the initial draft of the national documents began to evolve. The national English statement represented an official attempt to achieve a more consistent approach to the development of English curricula throughout the nation and to achieve 'a better coordinated and integrated system of literacy provision for all children'.[10] However, across the nation different solutions were being adopted to achieve system suitability while maintaining some semblance of national consistency. For Queensland certainly, the early draft of the national English statement was incompatible with the draft English syllabus and therefore its potential suitability for meeting system requirements was limited.

This incompatibility between national statement and state syllabus was seen at first as a serious difficulty. However, as both were being developed concurrently it allowed developments to be mutually informing. Writing teams worked to ensure that the two sets of materials could move towards essential compatibility and it is fair to say that there is a high level of consistency in the final versions. For example, both documents now share similar goals and content for learning English and a compatible curriculum framework.

There were also differences between the first draft of the national profile for English and the state draft of SPS. Some of these differences were resolved following the trial of the draft national profile. This trial took place in several states and included four schools in Queensland (see chapter 2). The trial highlighted some conceptual inconsistencies and, as a result, officers in Queensland were able to work with writers of the national profile to resolve major differences. A major outcome of this negotiation was the inclusion of four substrand organisers in the profile.

... in mathematics and English

Two senior policy officers in each of English and mathematics and one seconded teacher who had extensive experience in both primary education and regional advisory work were charged with preparing for a trial process in 1993. The team spent the second half of 1992:

- negotiating an acceptable process for trial through the State Studies Management Forum;
- organising working documents based on the draft national mathematics profile and the draft SPS in English;
- selecting trial schools;
- devising introductory workshops (mathematics) and two statewide conferences (English);
- developing guidelines for assessment, recording and reporting; and
- generating some folios of student work and assessment exemplars to describe what performance at each level in each strand might look like.

1993

... in mathematics

For mathematics, 83 schools were involved in the trial of the draft SPS materials as a framework for reporting to parents. The schools included 47 primary, 19 secondary, five primary schools with secondary departments, two special education units, one migrant education centre, two schools of distance education, and nine non-government schools. Schools from each of the 11 regions in the state were included and regions were asked to select schools according to certain criteria to ensure that the range and diversity of student populations in the state were represented.

In February and March, a series of one-day workshops was conducted throughout the state for all teachers who were to be involved in the trial.

In order to allow for collection of feedback and for rewriting and publishing of documents for wider implementation in 1994, the trial had to be brief and this was soon found to be one of the most significant constraints on the process.

The trial in primary schools took place from April to June and reports were required by the end of July. A final summary report of the trial was generally negative and it cited many impediments to success. These included:

- the brief nature of the trial phase;
- insufficient time allocated to professional development during the trial;
- the extremely large data collection and management load that teachers believed had been foisted upon them;
- the difficulty in making judgements about student performance in terms of the outcomes; and
- difficulty in identifying the links between 'input' documents, such as the syllabus and the year-level sourcebooks, and the 'outcomes' as listed in the SPS framework.

There were many positive comments and a few teachers could see value in the initiative but, overall, there was a great deal of negativity.

The trial in secondary schools took place during the period March to August and reports were required by the end of September. Of the 24 schools involved, 16 submitted reports and, of these, at least three did not really get started despite initial intentions. Almost none of the schools got as far as reporting to parents in the time available. Again the general impression was one of strong negativity. It was clear that a significant majority of the teachers involved believed that data gathering was impractical outside of pen-on-paper tests, SPS reports would not provide the information that parents wanted, and the outcomes were too difficult to interpret.

... in English

Feedback on the draft English Language Arts materials was collected from across the state from a large representative sample of people from within the educational community. The feedback informed the final writing of the syllabus. With respect to the Student Performance Standards, the state response to the incompatibility between the national profile and the local version of SPS was to trial both documents in an attempt to determine their suitability for system requirements, including reporting.

For English, 73 schools were involved in the trial and included 38 primary, 20 secondary, four primary schools with secondary departments, six special education units, one migrant education centre, one school of distance education, and five non-government schools. Around 350 teachers and 3000 students participated in the trial. As with mathematics, schools were chosen across all regions and to reflect the range and diversity of student populations across the state. A few schools were involved in both the mathematics and the English trialing, but generally schools trialed in only one learning area.

In March 1993, two statewide conferences were held for support personnel and representatives of trial schools. The audience included teachers, key teachers, administrators, education advisers and social justice advocates. The conferences were designed to explain and clarify:

- the rationale for using SPS;
- the draft national statement and profile;
- the draft SPS framework;
- the role of various participants in the trial process;
- assessment processes;
- sample folios of student work;
- recording systems;
- plans for professional development;
- reporting mechanisms;
- strategies to encourage parent participation; and
- processes for evaluation of the trial.

The trial took place from March to August. The final report raised issues similar to those in the mathematics reports. Issues included:

- the brevity of the trial phase;
- difficulty in making links between the national profile and state syllabus;
- open interpretability of the outcomes;
- time taken to collect, interpret and record adequate assessment information;
- the perception that SPS required massive data collection to support valid judgements;
- insufficient time for professional development;
- the difficulty in making judgements in terms of the outcomes;
- the importance of collaboration and consultation; and
- the difficulty of reporting to parents in a meaningful way.

As a result of these constraints, few schools got as far as reporting to parents in the time available. As with mathematics, the general impression was one of strong negativity although many teachers believed that the experience was a valuable professional development exercise.

Following the trial it was decided to negotiate with the Curriculum Corporation to edit the national English profile.[11] Approval was given to include an edited version of the profile, with modifications, in the English syllabus document package in Queensland.

... *in mathematics and English*

It was obvious from the trials that very few teachers were comfortable about, or experienced in, making judgements against defined standards. The perceptions expressed might have been interpreted as incorrect, misguided or perhaps lacking in insight. However, they represented the thoughts and beliefs of experienced teachers and there seemed to be a high probability that the views were representative of views generally held in schools. The only possible practical interpretation of the trial feedback, especially from the secondary sector, was that the implementation of SPS should not continue without massive support and much longer timelines.

Whilst the reports of the SPS trial were not widely disseminated, they certainly were influential in changing the course of implementation through an extension of the timelines and provision of more resources.

As a result of the trial, work began in late 1993 on the preparation of a professional development kit for implementing SPS in English and mathematics.[12] The kit included three components. A video was prepared to present a positive view of the value and practicality of SPS. An interactive CD ROM was begun with case studies of trial school teachers as they planned, taught, collected data and made judgements in terms of the SPS outcomes. A series of information booklets was written to provide definitive answers to questions commonly asked by teachers. These booklets addressed nitty-gritty issues such as timelines for implementation and the intended use of SPS for children with disabilities. The kit addressed the implementation of SPS in both mathematics and English.

The events of 1993 generated a great deal of concern among teachers and the Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) about the move to outcomes-based education. The level of uncertainty was further added to by the system-level delay in waiting for the AEC to reach a decision about national uptake of the profiles. At the beginning of the year, the situation was that the government had announced this move would take place, a trial was under way, few if any decisions had been made about provision of books or other resources and the appointment of Education Advisers within regions was a matter for decision by regions. By the end of the year, things had changed considerably.

1994

... *in mathematics*

The major focus by the Department of Education during 1994 was on the provision of support materials for mathematics. The national profile, under its local title of

Student Performance Standards in Mathematics for Queensland Schools,[13] was issued to teachers. Some 20 000 copies were purchased in order to supply one to each teacher involved. Sufficient copies of related materials, including *A National Statement on Mathematics for Australian Schools*[14] and *Mathematics - Work Samples*[15] were issued so that teachers had easy access to them. When the national document *Using the Mathematics Profile*[16] became available, it too was printed with a Queensland title, *Using Student Performance Standards in Mathematics,*[17] and issued to each teacher.

One copy of the professional development kit was issued to each state school. Several hundred copies were sold to the non-government systems.

Funds in excess of a million dollars were allocated to purchase 380 multimedia computers for use by teachers in professional development. This was the first step in a two-stage strategy to place one such computer in each government school. It represented a major commitment to support professional development but the emphasis was still on teachers being responsible for their own professional development largely in their own time.

All this resource provision occurred in the context of growing concern among teachers about the demands that the task would place upon them. The QTU imposed a ban on implementation of SPS that was not basically related to the implementation of SPS but rather had more to do with a general salary claim. However, in terms of SPS, the ban had a double impact. On the one hand it stopped many teachers from exploring the documents and using the professional development kit—and thus delayed them in the complex task of preparing themselves for a move to outcomes-based education. On the other hand, the ban helped reinforce the view among many teachers that if they ignored the whole initiative it would eventually go away.

Also during the first half of 1994, the federally funded National Professional Development Program (NPDP) came into operation. When submissions were called for, in late 1993, there was no indication that any significant funding for teacher release or advisory support would be made available by the state government. Officers within the Department put considerable effort into ensuring two things: that a very substantial amount of NPDP funds from the first round was allocated to mathematics; and that the project kept its aims firmly fixed on providing teachers with the opportunity to prepare themselves for implementation of SPS. Thus the NPDP project, managed by the professional association (the Queensland Association of Mathematics Teachers) in conjunction with six universities and a range of education systems (government, Catholic and independent), set about identifying and supporting a pool of 'facilitators'—classroom practitioners who could design and lead local events which teachers could attend in their own time. The project began within the context of a union ban on SPS and little explicit commitment by non-government education systems that they were going to implement SPS soon, if at all.

During the latter half of 1994 a major change took place in the SPS environment. The QTU entered an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) with the Department of Education. This included a commitment to implement SPS in English and mathematics across Years 3 to 8, along with other productivity commitments, in return for a staged series of wage increases over three years. The agreement also established a longer timeline, with mathematics to be implemented in three strands only—'number', 'space' and 'measurement'—in 1995, and then English and all six strands of mathematics in 1996.

No mention was made in the EBA text about any extension of SPS into Years 9 and 10 and this proved to be a significant distracter in secondary schools. Assessment and reporting practices in Years 9 and 10 have been concerned with grading and comparing students in terms of a set of exit criteria. The SPS framework at Year 8 was concerned with placing students on a developmental continuum. Thus, in lower secondary schools, two approaches to assessment and reporting, with surface similarities but deeper differences, were being allowed, and indeed mandated. It seems likely that the resulting confusion further encouraged teachers to believe that the emphasis on outcomes-based education might collapse in time. It certainly gave those secondary teachers who were not teaching Year 8 students an opportunity to defer their involvement in outcomes-based education.

... *in English*

For English, the situation was far less frenetic than it was for mathematics. The *English in Years 1 to 10 Queensland syllabus materials*[18] were distributed to all government schools in Queensland. Each administrative member and teacher of every school received their own copy. Numerous other bodies and personnel from within and outside the Department also received copies. The distribution of the English syllabus was the largest distribution ever to occur within the Department.

As one component of these materials, *A guide to using student performance standards in English* was issued in draft form and feedback was sought. The draft contains three sections which provide important advice for reporting student outcomes. The first section, 'The purpose and nature of student performance standards in English', outlines the purpose of using SPS and provides descriptions of the standards in three levels of detail—Level Statements; Outcomes in each Strand; and Pointers. The second section, 'Using student performance standards to determine a student's performance Levels', provides information about how to compare cumulated assessment information about a student's use and knowledge about English with Levels of student performance standards in English. The section also contains sample case studies to exemplify the process of assigning Levels of performance in each strand. The third section, 'Using student performance standards to report', provides advice about reporting processes. The emphasis is on relating student outcomes to the learning objectives set down in School English Programs, using folios of assessment information in face-to-face reporting, and providing descriptions and comments in written reports to assist parents and others to interpret the standard represented by a Level.

The major emphasis among central office and regional support staff was to assist schools in syllabus implementation. Together with the distribution of the syllabus materials came the Department's expectations regarding the completion of School English Programs, the first step in syllabus implementation. This entailed schools preparing planning documents to guide detailed planning and review and to provide a record of the English program in the school for administrators, teachers, support personnel, students and parents. Although there is an expectation in the syllabus that schools will develop their School English Programs in three components—a School English Overview, Class/Year Overviews and Unit Outlines—the focus at this early implementation stage was on the first of these.

The development of School English Programs also initiated an important preliminary step towards addressing comparability as an issue in terms of how School English Programs satisfy syllabus requirements as well as being responsive to the needs, interest and abilities of the school's student population. The process also provided a platform for a focus on planning for assessment at school, year and classroom level, not only to address comparability issues but also to ensure the comprehensive collection of assessment information in preparation for reporting student outcomes using SPS. With these syllabus implementation processes put in place, reporting in English using the SPS framework, although a matter for later, could flow naturally from the normal ongoing planning, implementation and evaluation cycles of learning and teaching.

Just as the English syllabus was completed and distributed, so was the SPS professional development kit referred to in the previous section. This meant that during the latter half of 1994, teachers could explore ways of using the kit to inform their understanding of the draft SPS in English within the framework of syllabus implementation.

1995

A major event that began in 1994, and came to fruition in 1995, was the government's response to the recommendations of the Wiltshire Report, *Shaping the Future.*[19] The initiatives clustered under the title Shaping the Future were wide-ranging, and contained several strategies that impacted directly on the implementation of SPS. They included establishment of a Year 2 'Diagnostic Net' to identify children with problems in literacy and numeracy; development of a Year 6 test in aspects of literacy and numeracy; implementation of a Junior Secondary Literacy and Numeracy Investigative Study; appointment of literacy and numeracy support teachers; identification of a core curriculum; introduction of a statewide system for reporting progress in all key learning areas; increased specialist support relating to behaviour management, gifted students, students with disabilities, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and greater emphasis on preparing students for the work place.

The initiative reaffirmed a commitment to the organisation of curriculum around the eight key learning areas and agreed to the appointment of a Key Learning Area

Regional Coordinator (KLARC) for each of the eight learning areas in each of the 11 administrative regions of the department. It further reinforced the immediate commitment to implementation of SPS in mathematics and English by the appointment of 90 Education Advisers for mathematics and 45 for English. These advisers were inducted in a statewide week-long series of workshops and then based at local school support centres. The number of non-contact days for teachers was increased and two of these days were allocated to SPS concerns. This represented a massive commitment to support for professional development for all teachers and the stage was set for a concentrated effort on mathematics in 1995 and English in 1996.

... in mathematics

One unfortunate side-effect of the appointment of all these support personnel was that many were drawn from the group of 'facilitators' that was currently being assembled by the NPDP project. The NPDP guidelines did not allow expenditure on teacher release and the project plans had been devised on the expectation that most professional development would have to occur in teachers' own time. In 1995, there was a significant change in expectation regarding the provision of professional development by the Department of Education in school time. The NPDP project lost personnel and had to cope with a significant change in professional development climate and thus stumbled badly at a crucial stage. It had to develop quite different plans and ways of providing a service to teachers. Funds for the project were cut severely in 1995 and it received no funding at all in 1996, the final year of NPDP nationally.

The situation regarding SPS was made more complex by the plans to develop the new Year 2 Diagnostic Net.[20] This was a heavily supported and well funded initiative to develop a diagnostic continuum that teachers would use in Years 1 and 2 (later extended to Year 3 also) to identify students who were in need of early intervention in mathematics and English. It provided training and release time for key teachers who would deliver short term intervention for the students so identified. The intention was that the Net would replace SPS in the early years of schooling. The initiative was clearly attractive to teachers. With respect to SPS, it tended to give schools, and especially those teachers with multi-age classes, another substantial challenge at a time when they were trying to cope with SPS reporting.

As 1995 progressed, the difficulty of implementing SPS in mathematics became more evident. Many teachers, especially in the secondary sector, had done little prior thinking, perhaps as a result of the union ban in 1994, and were well behind others in preparedness. Various sets of complex checklists, disseminated during the trial phase and generally found to be too complex and time-consuming, still loomed large in the heads and resource collections of many teachers. The commitment to assessment practices based on comparing students, rather than comparing performance against standards, was widespread and robust. Some concerns, such as those to do with workload and interpretation of outcomes, were based on teachers' experiences during 1994 and 1995. Other concerns were to do with assumptions about what lay ahead and related mainly to parents. It was widely assumed that parents would not value reports using SPS and a variety of reasons was advanced. It was assumed by many critics that parents want comparative rather than standards-based information, would not be able to understand the reports, would be argumentative about the SPS levels assigned, or would not be able to interpret the background information provided. However, there was also strong evidence that such problems might not eventuate. For example, the Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens Associations strongly supported SPS and was heavily involved in the development of support material.

Criticisms emerged during 1995 from individual teachers, the QTU and groups of administrators. Each set of criticisms that surfaced produced a reaction that led to extra provision of support from central office and from regional support personnel. Extra copies of the nationally prepared work samples document were purchased and issued to schools. A parent information kit was prepared in conjunction with the major body representing parents. An information booklet for parents was issued to all schools to accompany each report. Explanatory sheets about each level in each strand of the SPS framework were prepared and issued to schools, in hard copy and on disk, to assist them in responding to inquiries. Pads of the official report proforma, developed for use in 1995, were printed and sent to schools. Education Department personnel worked with teachers representing the QTU to prepare planning guides that made a link between learning experiences, assessment tasks and SPS outcomes. Funds were provided for the Queensland Association of Primary School Principals to develop and deliver a set of lectures for groups across the state about how to implement SPS. In addition, the provision of multimedia computers for professional development purposes was completed by the purchase of 700 computers to supplement the 380 purchased in 1994. In total, almost three million dollars had been expended to place a multimedia computer in each state school.

A major event in 1995 was the 'moderation day' in October. All teachers who were to use SPS for reporting met in groups to engage in a structured moderation process. Each teacher brought to the meeting an assessment record in each of the three strands, 'number', 'space' and 'measurement'. An assessment record consisted of an assessment task together with either a student's written response to the task or a description of that response. Teachers shared and compared ideas about students' performance and teachers' judgements and provided feedback to schools via structured proformas. The major purpose of the day was to give teachers an opportunity to develop shared understanding about outcomes-based assessment and reporting.

Teachers then prepared mathematics reports for students in Years 3 to 8 and issued them to families together with the information booklet that had been developed centrally. This took place very late in the school year. Schools were encouraged to offer parents an opportunity for a face to face interview if they wished to discuss the report in more detail, but were not directed to arrange such interviews.

Officers in the Quality Assurance and School Review Directorate carried out a formal evaluation of the moderation process and of responses by parents to the reports and information provided. Reports of these evaluations have been completed.[21] It appears that there was a generally positive response by teachers and parents to the process. Concerns were certainly not removed but there was a clear easing of tension within schools. There was a feeling among many observers that the whole moderation process had been well supported and managed and that the reporting took place in schools without giving rise to negative reactions by parents.

... in English

Following the development of School English Programs, a further departmental expectation was that schools should submit their programs for review based on the requirements of the *English in Years 1 to 10* syllabus materials.[22] This review of programs, which occurred in the first half of 1995, took the form of a statewide approval process requiring schools to submit a School English Overview to regional review panels. The panels were made up of teachers, school administrators, school support personnel, and quality assurance curriculum officers, who checked the Overviews against specified criteria. Schools received feedback on the quality of their Overviews and it is expected that their English programs will continue to be developed, in all three components, and reviewed over time.

While the School English Program approval process was in train, all state schools were also invited to experiment with the validity and use of SPS. They were not required to report to parents. A writing team was formed in mid 1995 to redraft SPS in the light of feedback gathered from schools' experience with SPS thus far.

The SPS writing team included classroom teachers, secondary heads of department, school administrators, regional education advisers, regional coordinators, social justice advocates, curriculum specialists and tertiary educators. The team was chosen to ensure an equitable and inclusive account of the performance of all students. Advice was sought from parent groups, unions and representatives of the non-government sectors of education. Feedback was sought through both statewide forums and informal professional networks on all structural and content aspects of the SPS framework.

The refinements made to SPS were quite complex. In order to retain consistency and compatibility with the national English profile, the Department decided that SPS would follow a number of 'givens'. One of these was that SPS would be organised in the same three strands (really combinations of 'modes') as the profile: 'speaking and listening', 'reading and viewing', and 'writing'. Another given was that a common set of substrands, or 'strand organisers', was to apply across each strand and each level. These became: *Texts; Contextual understanding; Linguistic structures and features;* and *Strategies*. Initially, the configuration of strands was an issue for Queensland as the writers of the first draft of SPS had chosen just two substrands: Use and Knowledge. The redrafted SPS became more consistent with the national profile by using the same framework of strands and substrands.

The SPS in English, however, are still distinctive in a number of ways. In the first and second re-drafts, some outcome statements have been modified to link more closely with the English syllabus and to discriminate better between the levels. Other modifications have been made to show more clearly the progression from level to level. In the most recent unpublished draft of SPS, the framework of the level statements and the names of the substrands have been closely linked with the elements and terminology of the English syllabus. In Queensland, the substrands have been renamed: *Texts in use; Cultural and social understandings; Textual features;* and *Procedures*. The content of the level statements and the outcomes have been linked to syllabus aspects of learning and sequence. These modifications indicate a commitment to writing outcomes that are integrally related to the state syllabus. They also indicate areas of divergence from the national profile.

Other modifications were made to the SPS in 1995 to facilitate the appropriate and effective use of the reporting framework within a curriculum cycle. The expectation is that SPS are to be directly relevant to teachers' everyday work. To this end, the SPS framework developed during 1995 consists of level statements and outcomes only, with no 'pointers' (see chapter 1), arranged in seven levels for the ten years of schooling.

In re-drafting SPS, the challenge has been to deal with both the 'givens' in the national profile—that is, the same framework of strands and substrands and the same three strands—and the Queensland syllabus principles and aspects of learning. The result is that there is sufficient overlap between state and national frameworks that SPS in English could be used for reporting at the state level and, if need be, at the national level.

1996

By the end of 1995 there was a degree of optimism that the implementation of SPS could continue in mathematics and extend into English in 1996 without the need for the frenetic response to emerging concerns that dogged the whole project in 1995. It was recognised, however, that continued massive human and financial support would be necessary to maintain the momentum. It was agreed by the government of the day that the 90 Education Advisers for mathematics and 45 for English would continue throughout 1996. It was understood also that funding for major support projects, including around half a million dollars for publishing parent information booklets and conducting the moderation day in October, would be available in 1996.

Work continued in late 1995 in preparation for the extension to reporting in six strands of mathematics in 1996. A small group of teachers was contracted to write year level planning guides for mathematics in Years 4 to 8 to show how particular teachers used an outcomes-based approach in the classroom. A range of assessment records had been collected on the moderation day. Work began on organising these in booklets and preparing them for publication. Subsequent events put this work on hold.

In English, the work of re-drafting SPS continued into the early months of 1996 in preparation for regional consultation and endorsement through the State Studies Management Forum process, but again subsequent events put these plans on hold. The regional Education Advisers, however, continued to assist schools in the preparation of the more detailed Class/Year Overviews and Unit Outlines as part of their School English Programs.

In March 1996, Queensland had a change of government as a result of a by-election in Mundingburra. One of the very first acts by the new Liberal–National Party Coalition Minister for Education was to initiate a review of SPS in line with election promises. Accordingly, the implementation of SPS was placed on hold. Schools were informed that there was no requirement to implement SPS in mathematics or English in 1996, although individual schools could continue to report achievement in the three strands of mathematics if the whole school community was in agreement.

A review group was established to provide advice to the Minister on:

- the extent to which SPS matches the current Queensland syllabus in mathematics;
- changes that might be needed in the syllabus or SPS framework;
- ways of rewriting SPS outcomes in language that is more readily recognised by teachers;
- strategies for reducing the data gathering and administrative load;
- the links between the SPS frameworks in mathematics and English and the Year 2 Diagnostic Net;
- implications for other learning areas of implementing any proposed changes to SPS in English and mathematics in the development of syllabuses, student learning outcomes and reporting frameworks, including the appropriate number of levels with the reporting framework and the capacity of the proposed SPS to fulfil Commonwealth requirements to report learning outcomes that are nationally consistent.

Learning areas other than English and mathematics

No decisions were made about implementation of SPS in the other six learning areas. Support personnel in three areas: science, technology, and health and physical education, have done some fairly widespread awareness raising across the state. It seems likely, however, that in most schools little awareness has been generated about the statements and profiles in areas other than English and mathematics.

Science

The Science Teachers Association of Queensland has coordinated a program of professional development in collaboration with tertiary institutions, the Department of Education and non-state education systems using NPDP funds. Workshops have been conducted throughout the state to raise teachers' awareness about the science statement and profile. These have been very well attended as there has been a growing awareness over several years that the science curriculum is due for review. In fact, one of the first tasks required of the new curriculum authority, the Queensland Schools Curriculum Office (QSCO) established in 1995, is to develop a Years 1 to 10 science syllabus and work on this is currently under way.

Health and physical education

For health and physical education, officers within the Department of Education have collaborated with officers from the Victorian Directorate of School Education and some tertiary educators using NPDP strategic initiatives funding. In Queensland, 40 teachers in 20 schools have been involved in a trial of the national statement and profile. The project is in its third year of operation. In addition, some 400 teachers were surveyed in Queensland in order to map the perceptions of primary and secondary teachers. The intent was to identify differences between the versions of health and physical education that are in the national statement and profile and current practices that actually take place in schools and classrooms.[6] The report of this survey should be of great value in the near future as QSCO has also begun to prepare a syllabus for health and physical education in Queensland.

Languages other than English

For Languages other than English, the Modern Languages Teachers Association of Queensland also received NPDP funds to conduct some limited professional development relating to statements and profiles. This has been a very small-scale activity, compared to the science activities, and has raised awareness among only a few teachers in state and non-state systems.

Technology

The technology learning area is a new area in Queensland education and has been fortunate to have arrived at a time when KLARCs were appointed in each of the 11 regions of the Department of Education. These officers have expended much effort in raising awareness about technology education. In late 1994, workshops were held in Townsville and Beenleigh as part of trialing by the Technology Education Federation of Australia of a professional development kit it had developed. Further workshops were held in Townsville in 1995. The two home economics professional associations used NPDP funding to conduct workshops for teachers of home economics. Various parts of the Catholic Education sector conducted technology education workshops. Funds from The Australian Automotive Industry Training Council, the Department of Education and NPDP were used in

1995 to help a small number of schools develop technology programs which build on their existing programs and activities. A range of such small-scale activities has occurred throughout the state. Since technology education is a new learning area with limited resources, those teachers who have been involved in these initiatives have all drawn heavily upon the national statement and profile.

Studies of society and environment

For studies of society and environment, no formal promotion of the statement and profile has taken place. However, a number of small-scale activities has occurred. For example, many regional KLARCs for this learning area have engaged in discussion about the statement and profile with groups of teachers and in particular with secondary heads of department in subject areas such as home economics and history. Some non-state schools are reported to have re-designed their subject offerings in the lower secondary years and moved towards thematic arrangements rather than the traditional history and geography courses.

The arts

No work has been undertaken to use the statement and profile for the arts or to raise general awareness about them.

Implementation in the non-government sector

Some fairly sporadic activity has occurred among the various schools that make up the non-government sector.

The Catholic Education system comprises five quite separate dioceses and a range of schools operated by various religious orders. In general terms, the Brisbane diocese and one other diocese had decided to implement SPS in English in 1996. This decision was taken as a result of the involvement of many schools from these dioceses in the development and trial of the state English syllabus materials, the development and implementation of a School English Program endorsement process, and the participation of personnel as members of the writing team in redrafting SPS in English. The other three dioceses decided to implement SPS in mathematics first. Despite these decisions, the actual activity that occurred in schools depended largely on the interests of teachers in each school. For example, some Catholic primary schools in the Brisbane area spent much effort in preparing for the use of SPS in mathematics. On the other hand, teachers in many Catholic schools would hardly have heard of SPS at all. The Queensland Catholic Education Commission organised a bulk purchase of sets of national statements and profiles in all learning areas. In some dioceses these were distributed while in others they were not distributed because of a desire not to overwhelm teachers. There are no data available as to the intended take-up by order-owned Catholic schools.

The other independent schools in Queensland form even less of a 'system' and there is therefore even less chance of getting a picture of what might have been the general knowledge of, or intention to take up, national documents. It is a reasonable assumption, however, that little more than a cursory reading of some national documents has taken place in most non-government, non-Catholic schools.

Currently, action regarding the national statements and profiles in all non-government schools is on hold pending decisions by QSCO as to its recommendations regarding outcomes-based assessment and reporting.

Issues

Experience with outcomes-based assessment and reporting in Queensland has had a brief but chequered history and has developed within a constantly shifting political and industrial context. The experience has been sufficient, however, to allow those deeply involved in that history to make the following assertions with some confidence. The assertions are stated here with reference to the situation midway through term 4 of 1996. Subsequent events, which have led to a substantial change in emphasis on outcomes-based assessment and reporting in Queensland, are described in a postscript to this chapter.

Managing assessment

SPS have implications for how teaching, learning, and assessing occur in the classroom. They will involve most teachers in collecting assessment data in more systematic and comprehensive ways than they currently employ. Teachers will need to plan very carefully for assessment, being mindful of the full range of objectives. The challenge is to be selective and efficient in data collection, and effective in the analysis and interpretation of assessment data. It is critical that teachers think about manageable, flexible, and systematic ways of recording assessment information. An essential message is that SPS will not require more assessment—more assessment is not necessarily better assessment—and that SPS will not require teachers to keep copious records for each student. It may be necessary to refocus some of the assessment currently undertaken in order to ensure that information is available across all strands. The challenge is to reflect on the efficiency and effectiveness of methods of gathering, interpreting and recording information about student achievement.

A comprehensive Schools Information Management System is being developed for trial in Queensland. One module that is planned is a Schools Assessment Module (SAM) with the intention of assisting schools and individual teachers to capture assessment data at important stages throughout the school career of each student. It is intended, for example, that data collected from the Year 2 Diagnostic Net and the Year 6 test will be gathered and collated within this module. Once decisions are made about the future of SPS as an assessment and reporting framework, the SAM module will be used to record assessment data and the results of decision making about SPS levels achieved in the various learning areas. At present this module is still being planned and has not yet reached trialing stage.

Profiling achievement

There has been a great deal of debate about appropriate procedures for profiling student achievement. In Queensland, teachers are increasingly being expected to record and profile student performance in folios of assessment information but definitive instructions as to just what is required have not been issued. This is an issue that is constantly being explored but without resolution. It is clear, however, that effective profiling involves systematic management of an assessment program. This entails identifying what is to be assessed, and then selecting relevant assessment and monitoring techniques and specific instruments. From this, the assessment information is collected and interpreted. It is critical that teachers record interpreted information in a folio of assessment information for each student which may include some form of cumulative record. Teachers are continuing to explore the notion of a central cumulative recording mechanism that draws on a diverse sampling of student work and contains information about the teacher's interpretations of student performance. It is paramount that the sampling, which is a feature of the assessment system, be manageable. Folios can provide a vehicle for progressively culling and updating assessment information to ensure that it is comprehensive and reflects progress.

Developing shared understanding

Despite the hiatus during 1996 on SPS implementation in Queensland, the Minister for Education has indicated that there is a commitment to the implementation of outcomes-based reporting in English and mathematics. There would appear to be at least three reasons for this. Firstly, an outcomes-based framework is a means of responding to the demands by the community for greater accountability in education; secondly, an outcomes-based framework will enable the state's education system to adopt a consistent approach to reporting against established standards; and thirdly, there is some acceptance that it is appropriate to rely on teachers' informed judgements of student performance. The current emphasis on accountability and consistency point to an expectation that an outcomes-based framework will be uniformly applied. For this to occur, a shared understanding of the framework and a shared interpretation of the levels must exist.

Although the form of SPS that is eventually agreed upon may be aligned with the state syllabuses, performance standards are an abstract construct and therefore remain open to interpretation. This is to be expected. However, over time, it is also expected that teachers will have opportunities to share understandings of the standards, and to develop a sense of 'levelness'. Importantly, SPS offers teachers a language for thinking and talking about standards which they can use with colleagues, parents, and students. The range of moderation practices that took place as part of the implementation of SPS in mathematics were found to be an important step in familiarising teachers with the standards. Some form of moderation meetings will be necessary to allow teachers to meet together in their schools and in school networks to share folios of assessment information. Experience so far indicates that it will take quite a long time for teachers to fully accept and value the importance of teacher judgement as a factor in decisions about student performance and to become confident that consistency of interpretation of assessment information has been generated.

Making judgements

In each learning area, there are strands for which teachers will be collecting assessment data as a basis for the process of decision making about 'levelness'. The process could be understood as a mapping exercise whereby teachers will be looking at patterns of student performance over time.

Briefly, there are three main steps in determining levels. Firstly, evidence of the student's performance is compared with level statements to suggest a range of possible levels that might be assigned. Initially, this may cover two or three levels. Secondly, the teacher confirms the estimated level by comparing the performance with specified outcomes. Thirdly, and this is of particular importance, for each strand the teacher judges the best match between the student's performance and the set of interdependent substrands. Teachers' professional expertise is involved in determining the 'best fit' in this regard.

Since the release of the Scott Report,[24] Queensland secondary teachers have been required to make judgements of student achievement based on pre-determined criteria and standards. From this experience they have gained considerable skills in standards-based decision making and are able to draw on existing expertise as they set about implementing SPS. This experience is to some extent a double-edged sword since the frameworks for Year 12 exit certification, although standards-based, are largely to do with grading a group of students in terms of broad criteria. This is a quite different process from judging the performance of a particular student against a sequence of more detailed outcomes. However, there is at least some body of experience among secondary teachers.

To date, apart from the experience with mathematics in 1995, the state's primary teachers have not been involved at all in using stated standards to judge student performance because of the 'hold' on implementation. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the move to SPS will require a significant conceptual change for some. This highlights the importance of 'the teacher judgement factor' and the part the SPS framework can play in enhancing that judgement.

Checks and balances

There is still room for debate about the need for some statutory certifying authority to oversee the implementation of SPS, and if necessary, to install appropriate checks and balances on teacher judgement.

A significant expectation so far has been that teachers working in cluster groups of schools would use folios of assessment information to share their interpretations of performance levels and, in so doing, would calibrate their judgements. The moderation meetings therefore were assumed to be the vehicles that would provide the necessary checks and balances. Again, comparability is dependent on the development of common and shared understandings about standards. Planning within Queensland has been based on an assumption that shared understanding about standards is best built up at the school, district and regional levels rather than imposed by an external certifying authority.

For English, comparability as an issue has been addressed in terms of how the School English Program satisfies syllabus requirements, while being responsive to the needs, interests and abilities of the school's student population. As mentioned earlier, School English Programs in Queensland have recently undergone a statewide approval process. This involved schools in submitting a School English Overview to regional review panels. The panels were made up of teachers, school administrators, school support personnel, and Quality Assurance curriculum officers. The approval process entailed checking the overview against specified criteria. Schools have received feedback on the quality of the overview and it is expected that programs will continue to be reviewed over time.

Decisions have not yet been made as to whether similar processes for monitoring school programs in mathematics will be instituted.

Key competencies

Little has been done in Queensland in a formal way to link the Mayer key competencies[25] with work done on the statements and profiles. Six research projects involving the key competencies have been undertaken or are still in progress in schools, but their foci were or are the feasibility of teaching, assessing and reporting on achievement of the competencies by post-compulsory students. The projects thus have had concerns in common with the statements and profiles implementation (effective teaching, assessing and reporting), but their focus has been on a different student clientele.

Two of the projects involve assessing and reporting performance of the key competencies in both the school curriculum and workplace experiences. A student portfolio, involving 470 students, is being developed and trialed in 19 schools, both government and non-government. A fundamental premise of these projects is that non-subject aspects of the curriculum are often overlooked in student assessment and reporting, despite the fact that performance in these contexts often links very visibly to life- and work-related skills. The aim is to have students understand and own the process of portfolio development throughout Years 11 and 12.

Another project involved the documentation of case studies. A draft document has been circulated for feedback and a final document will be prepared. The title indicates the nature of the research: 'Effective learning, effective teaching and the Key Competencies - Classroom experience in English, Biology and Art'.

The Board of Senior Secondary School Studies has also been engaged in a major project to map the extent to which the key competencies are evident in the various

Board syllabuses available for Years 11 and 12. The aim is to determine how current exit certificates of achievement could be expanded to include reports on the demonstration of key competencies as a result of undertaking courses of study based on the Board syllabuses. This project has not yet been completed.

The key competencies projects mentioned are all research projects. No decision has yet been made on the implementation of the key competencies in Queensland schools.

Looking to the future

Despite the review of the implementation of the SPS in Queensland carried out during most of 1996, it is clear that certain preconditions existed for making rapid progress with the use of outcomes-based reporting in English and mathematics if government approval to proceed had been forthcoming.

With respect to English, every school in Queensland was provided with sets of the syllabus materials. In the state system, every teacher received a personal copy. Also, the approval process for School English Programs has been implemented and reviewed. Feedback showed a high level of endorsement for the process of reviewing school programs and of the programs themselves.

In mathematics, teachers in state schools were perhaps overwhelmed by the issue of support materials that included syllabus and guidelines, the national statement and profile, work samples, 'how to' documents, parent brochures and workshops, information in several languages other than English, and all manner of materials prepared by regional support personnel.

An interactive multimedia professional development package for teachers exists and a computer has been placed in every state school to allow opportunity for practical professional development. Also, a workshop kit was developed in conjunction with the Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens Associations (QCPCA) to inform parents about SPS in mathematics and in English.

Around 150 Education Advisers in mathematics and English continued to work throughout 1996. They were largely appointed to support system initiatives, are based in school support centres and generally respond to needs expressed by teachers and administrators in schools attached to the centres. They support teachers both in general matters of syllabus implementation and with the particular challenges posed by SPS. While SPS were on hold they assisted schools in the development of school programs and worked with teachers in classroom planning with a special focus on assessment.

Whatever changes were to be made to the SPS frameworks in mathematics and English as a result of the review by the QSCO, Queensland at the end of 1996 had a body of teachers who had access to a large range of resources and who had had some experience with outcomes-based reporting. At that time, Queensland seemed well placed to make a smooth transition to an outcomes-based approach to reporting in mathematics and English that could, despite some differences in emphasis, be reasonably compatible with the national statements and profiles.

Postscript

Events during 1996

The review of Student Performance Standards was conducted during 1996 and led to the production of a report entitled *Queensland Levels of Student Performance* (QLSP) by the QSCO. The major recommendation was that SPS in mathematics should be replaced by a new framework, still closely linked to the national profile, but replacing the sets of outcomes and pointers (see chapter 1 for an explanation of terms) with single page *strand level statements* for each level in each of five strands of mathematics. The extra strand, 'Working mathematically', was to be incorporated within the other strands. The report also contained a host of recommendations to do with assessment guidelines, school work programs, the keeping of student folios, and moderation procedures. A timeline was suggested, with implementation in mathematics to begin in 1997 and a similar process to occur in English beginning in 1998. This would have required the development of a new framework for English based on the concept of *strand level statements*.

The report was not well received. Reaction by senior officers in the various education systems was that the new framework was only marginally easier to read and understand than its predecessor. It was also widely believed that decision making based on the new *strand level statements* would not be any easier than using the original SPS outcomes. Many of the associated recommendations were rejected on the basis that the responsibility for matters to do with work programs and folios lay with education systems rather than with the QSCO.

The Minister for Education announced in early November that the new QLSP framework

> would be trialed in volunteer schools in 1997, and if mutually acceptable to parents and teachers, will be implemented in 1998. These trials will apply only to mathematics and English.[28]

The Queensland Teachers Union came out strongly against the whole report and suggested that SPS in any form should be allowed to die quickly. The union issued an interim directive to teachers urging them not to be involved pending a possible ballot on the matter.

A moderate level of confidence existed, towards the end of 1995, that some opposition had been dissipated through the moderation activities and that SPS could be implemented if high support levels were maintained. By the end of 1996 this confidence had completely evaporated. A new form of SPS has been proposed and generally rejected. A limited trial may take place in 1997 but, if so, it will be within a context of negativity. Many teachers simply do not want to be involved with outcomes-based assessment and reporting. There is alienation among those teachers who gave it their best effort before and who now feel abandoned. There is the threat of further industrial action by unions. There is ongoing political instability in a situation where the present government stays in power only with the support of an independent member. The number of regional Education Advisers for mathematics and English in 1997 has been cut back fro 135 to 45.

By the end of 1996, it appeared highly unlikely that general use would be made of the national profiles as reporting frameworks across all schools and systems in Queensland. Attention seemed to be shifting to more limited initiatives. National benchmarks and expanded use of formal testing programs in schools are becoming more commonly discussed within education in this state.

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8 Renewing the Curriculum Cycle in South Australia

Jennifer Stehn

Introduction

Many public sector organisations are trying to break with past styles of planning and policy development. Most commonly these were processes of etching plans in tablets of stone which, after being carried down from the mountain, remained inviolate. Within large educational organisations the move is from notions of 'We develop and then rigidly adhere to detailed three year plans' to 'We plan flexibly and responsively'. In this context, processes of curriculum change in the education sector can now legitimately be recognised as organic and disjointed as they progress through stages of conceptualisation and implementation.

The development and introduction of the 'Attainment Levels' and the Curriculum Statements and Profiles in South Australia provide a significant example of curriculum change as a complex, interactive, at times messy, learning journey rather than as an end-on, linear progression of planned actions.

The materials and the curriculum review and reform which they support, have caused, and still are causing, intensive debate in all parts of the education community. And rightly so. The two questions at the centre of the discussions are 'What should students learn?' and 'What should teachers, parents, educational support groups, government and the public know about what students have learnt?'

Although it was not widely recognised at the time, in 1989 South Australian educators joined what was a global education trend in addressing these two questions. In most education systems, progress has been fraught by complexities, uncertainties and anxieties as well as buoyed by creativity and deep commitment. The most common reference points for South Australians in addressing the two core questions have been the United Kingdom National Curriculum[1] and more recently the United States New Standards movement.[2] South Australia's work has influenced and been influenced by events and ideas in other educational arenas. Most influential however have been local notions of what is valued, what is practical, what is needed and what is wanted.

Freedom and authority

In the late eighties, the curriculum culture of the South Australian government schooling system was characterised by a high level of autonomy within schools and curriculum units. Teachers were encouraged to break from rigid and repetitive curriculum practices and to vary their teaching programs creatively. A large advisory curriculum service supported teachers in their experimentations. By the end of the eighties and into the early nineties many teachers and advisers could no longer identify the original source of this laissez-faire culture, but were nevertheless still very much influenced by the 'Freedom and Authority in Schools' memorandum of 1970. In August of that year the Director-General of Education, Albie Jones, sent a memorandum to the heads of Departmental schools, defining what was meant by the freedom that heads and teachers were exhorted to use:

> Within the broad framework of the Education Act, the general curriculum advised by the curriculum boards and approved by me as Director-General of Education, and the general policy set by the Director of your Division and communicated to you by circular, you have the widest liberty to vary courses, to alter the timetable, to decide the organisation of the school and government within the school, to experiment with teaching methods, assessment of student achievement and in extra-curricular activities.[3]

Against the strongly enduring and pervasive practices and attitudes generated by this memorandum, the introduction of common frameworks for teaching and reporting and the requirement to teach eight areas of study were resisted initially by many as it 'represented the return to centralised curriculum prescription in South Australia'.[4]

The need to know

There were many groups and individuals with a strong interest in the development and introduction of the Attainment Levels and then the Curriculum Statements and Profiles in South Australia—parents, students, teachers, principals, curriculum officers, those working to improve educational equity, those working in areas of school review and quality assurance, the Senior Executive of the Education Department and government. These groups have described their need to know what is taught in schools and how students are progressing in their learning. The strength of this interest by different groups has maintained the momentum for change.

Garth Boomer, the Associate Director-General of Education (Curriculum) from 1988 to 1993, was clear and often provocative in his description of why South Australia needed to embark on this new curriculum path. Curriculum support had been 'strong on injunction and exhortation, on setting out processes, skills and values to be pursued [but] relatively weak or silent on specific student outcomes which might be expected and assessed at various stages'.[5] Curriculum documents provided guidance for those who wanted to use them. They described the intentions for what students should learn, but there was no system wide agreement on what would be evident if these intentions had been achieved. Neither was there, in the compulsory years of schooling, a common and agreed means of reporting what had been achieved.

Closing the cycle

The Attainment Levels and the Curriculum Statements and Profiles Projects were initiated as ways of 'closing the curriculum cycle', of linking, in very concrete ways, the knowledge gained through assessment of students' learning progress with curriculum planning and programming. Figure 8.1 shows how the various elements of curriculum planning, instruction and review are conceptualised as forming a closed circle—the missing link in earlier curriculum planning and programming was that it was not as a matter of course informed by student achievement information.

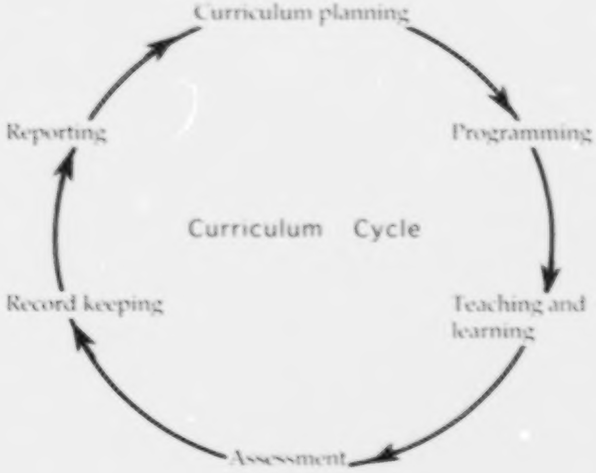

Figure 8.1 The Closed Curriculum Cycle

The conscious but broad delineation of common descriptions of what should be taught in schools and the introduction of a means of systematically describing student progress against levels of achievement, according to Boomer, speaking at a conference in Canada, was to:

> assist teachers, parents and students in the ongoing diagnosis of progress, bring curriculum espousals and curriculum outcomes into better alignment and enable the system to diagnose shortcomings and strengths, and so inform curriculum development, the allocation of teachers and the development of resources to improve educational outcomes.[8]

The motivation of improving student learning outcomes, Boomer described more bluntly in forums within South Australia. For example:

> Even where there has been superficial or cosmetic change (classrooms looking different) it may be that on closer examination basic orientations to curriculum, knowledge and teaching have remained fairly static (witness the so-called individualisation of teaching in 'open space' schools which on examination

> often revealed that the same old textbook exercises were simply being cut up into the form of 'cardboard' curriculum still validating a fairly behaviouristic, non-interactive headset).
>
> The irony then may be that having devolved greater curriculum discretion to schools in the interest of greater diversity, vitality and creativity, the system may have unwittingly created a recipe for curriculum inertia, if not regression, with publishers inheriting the curriculum power at one end, and the assignment habit tying down 'more of the same' at the other.[7]

Education equity

The introduction of common curriculum and reporting frameworks for all schools or, as in the United States, of standards, has been promoted amongst other motivations, 'so that children would no longer be at the mercy of where or to whom they were born'.[8]

Within the broad purpose of curriculum renewal, the motive of promoting educational equity through the introduction of the Attainment Levels and then the Curriculum Statements and Profiles was consistent throughout this curriculum initiative in South Australia. As stated by Wallace:

> The Attainment Levels make explicit that which has been implicit ... While [curriculum] expectations and demands remain implicit we are less likely to examine our beliefs and values or the knowledge we believe to be important. We are more likely to accept and act on stereotypes ... A girl interviewed in a poverty research project said 'they don't teach us the hard stuff'. She was disappointed in the lack of demand she felt her teachers made of her. Stereotypes generated a level of expectation of her achievement she saw as insufficient. Attainment Levels will mean that teachers, parents and the community and students will have explicit statements about curriculum knowledge and processes.[9]

The Attainment Levels and the Curriculum Statements and Profiles were introduced also to monitor the achievements of different groups of students. The South Australian education system did not have a system-wide means of backing up the assertion of differential achievements of different groups of students. Use of the Attainment Levels and then the Curriculum Profiles would provide broad data to direct action to improve the schooling outcomes of such groups as Aboriginal students.

More accountability

The need of parents to know the curriculum expected to be covered in a school and how their child is progressing within that curriculum has been another strong motivational factor in South Australia. The attitude of many parents to the curriculum review and reform initiative is epitomised in a recent South Australian Association of State Schools Organisation (SAASSO) statement:

> Parents have been seeking a national curriculum framework to provide common elements to school programs in various states of Australia.

> Clearly it is inappropriate in an age of information explosion for curriculum to be absolutely specific and limiting, but guiding principles are sought.
>
> The current development of Statements and Profiles achieves the objectives stated above.[10]

Commitments to improve accountability to government are entwined within the educational rhetoric and practice of the introduction of the Attainment Levels and the Curriculum Statements and Profiles. This aspect of the initiative has frequently politicised the educational debate and polarised opinion. After five years of intense discussion, particularly with the teachers' union, on how and why the public education system should report to government, there is an acceptance of the need to do so, but still some suspicion of how the information will be used.

The Attainment Levels Project

The Attainment Levels Project was the first phase of the South Australian curriculum review and reform initiative.

In August 1990, the Director-General of Education, Ken Boston, gave developers a project brief:

> 1 To tell us what students should understand and be capable of doing in each of the eight required areas of study, at six stages during their passage from Reception to Year 10.
>
> 2 To express this as standards referenced levels of attainment.
>
> 3 To provide us with a system of reporting which will satisfy three requirements:
>
> - the need to report to the parents on the performance of the child, against the standards referenced levels of attainment;
> - the need for the system to monitor the performance of the school against the same criteria; and
> - the need to aggregate the performance of schools into a system view of performance, expressed in terms of attainment levels in each curriculum area.[11]

During 1990 and 1991, levels of attainment for the eight areas of study were written. From 1990 through to 1993, the content and use of these materials were debated, trialed and revised.

All of the previously described needs were apparent at the beginning of the Attainment Levels Project. In a teachers' newsletter, Boomer wrote:

> In a public education system which has the responsibility of ensuring that all young people have access to a high quality, broad based and well balanced curriculum, we cannot operate in a laissez-faire manner, leaving things to chance. We must now clarify what we expect our students to be able to know, do and understand at various stages in relation to the designated areas of learning.[12]

The immediate pressure to take up the task was greater from outside than from within South Australian schools. South Australia was one of the last Western education systems to put in place a public reporting system for other than the senior secondary years. The fact that something was to be put in place was not consulted on; the decision to commence was in no uncertain terms 'top down'. Too few members of the profession realised, however, how much room for influence there was in the development of the detail of the content of the materials and how they could be used. The nature of the enterprise was very broadly framed by Boomer, drawing on some work by Royce Sadler in Queensland[13], some practices in the Toronto Benchmarks[14], but mostly building on some very strong values within the South Australian teaching profession.

What was aimed for was 'a loose system with rigor'[15] or, as Boomer described it:

> [The Attainment Levels] will provide curriculum scope, sequence and outcomes, sufficiently detailed and illustrated to be clear, but open enough and generative enough to allow and stimulate creativity and local innovation. They will provide a secure and reasonable touchstone, developed by teachers out of teacher practices, at a time of considerable educational change and turbulence. They will help teachers and the public system itself to clarify directions and standards without confining and prescribing detail. And they will do this while putting teachers' professional judgement in the vanguard.[16]

Writing teams led by the superintendents of curriculum were formed for each of the areas of the curriculum. These consisted mostly of curriculum officers and teachers. A cross-referencing group reviewed all the documents to improve consistency between documents. A reference group of academics, parents, principals and union representatives provided advice to the Associate Director-General (Curriculum). The materials and associated curriculum processes were trialed in schools. There were subsequent revisions of the documents and refinements to such processes as the assigning of levels of achievement and reporting the information to parents.

The deputy principal in one of the trial schools remarked '[the trial] brought me back to look more closely at our assessment and reporting policy. At our parent interviews we can now talk about what a child knows, understands and can do.'[17]

The Area Principals' Association representative reported to Curriculum Directorate members that 'there is a strong feeling that primary educators appreciate that they are helping to establish a tighter direction for primary education'.[18]

However, the work was truly exploratory in ways that many of those involved found disconcerting—in its focus on content as well as on processes and learning outcomes. Key points of discussion by the developers of the Attainment Levels were the differences between descriptions of curriculum content and curriculum frameworks and most significantly how to write learning outcomes that really were outcomes. There were examples to learn from in other education systems, and while the topics of programming, assessment and reporting were familiar, being so explicit about them was demanding. There was a commitment within the development teams to draw on South Australian expertise, both in the content that was valued in schools and in ways of using the materials that made sense in classrooms and staffrooms.

Early premises of the Attainment Levels work, still relevant in the present use of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles, were that:

- teaching within a common, broad framework enables more targeted responses to individual and group learning needs than teaching according to detailed prescriptive requirements or syllabuses;
- a high degree of confidence in teachers' knowledge of their students' learning needs and in teachers' abilities to make judgements about their students' progress is possible;
- descriptions of learning progress are necessary in the teaching and learning process;
- students, parents, the school and government all have a right to know about the nature and rates of learning progress;
- detailed information on how students are progressing is a sensible basis for curriculum planning; and
- expectations of what students can and should learn should arise from agreements about what is valued for all and not according to assumptions based on race, gender, socio-economic status, geographical location or physical or intellectual characteristics.

In the week before the start of the 1992 school year, the Attainment Levels folders were despatched to schools from the Education Department's stores. Each teacher in junior primary, primary, Aboriginal, area and special schools received a personal copy. Each secondary school received sets as curriculum resources.

During that year the documents and their uses in curriculum programming and reporting were the focus of a large number of training and development sessions. In many schools, teachers used the materials as programming resources and, to a lesser extent, in the assignment of levels of achievement.

The work of the Curriculum Division was increasingly informed by schools' experiences with the Attainment Levels and by experiences elsewhere. The broad context was described by one principal curriculum officer:

> There has been increasing recognition, both internationally and nationally, that information gathered by teachers about student achievement needs to be systematically collected and reported upon. The South Australian Education Department recognises and supports this developing view and is contributing to the development of more effective and efficient ways of monitoring student achievement so that the education system can be more responsive and accountable for the curriculum offered to students in its care.[9]

In 1993, 69 schools with Reception to Year 7 student enrolments took part in a trial of the collection of levels of achievement data through the use of an Oracle software program.[20] The trial provided information for a case study report on student achievement in South Australia—the first public report in South Australia on student achievement.[21]

Early critics

The work with the Attainment Levels engendered both enthusiasm and scepticism, and in some cases hostility. Alan Reid, of the University of South Australia, gave voice to those who were strongly critical of the project:

> In trying to be all things to all people, the project falls short of achieving any of its aims ... along the way it constructs a form of ideological and political control that makes it a repressive rather than a liberating educational tool.[22]

Those most critical were the advocates of either standardised testing or of school-based curriculum independence. Many teachers, however, described engaging with the process as professional renewal. The need to know was, by then, less frequently debated than the means of knowing.

The state and national mix

Perhaps the most difficult years in the history of the South Australian curriculum review and reform initiative were 1992 and 1993. They were the years of metamorphosis, when the documents supporting curriculum review and reform changed from the Attainment Levels to the nationally developed Curriculum Statements and Profiles.

The duality of the time was evident in the late 1992 edition of the *Attainment Levels Teachers' Newsletter:*

> The Director-General has approved the circulation to principals of a memo and booklet which describes in detail the plan for the continuing introduction of the attainment levels in 1993. The plan recognises that we in South Australia will eventually be using the national profiles currently being prepared through the co-operation of all states and territories.[23]

During 1992, much of the energy that had gone into the development of the Attainment Levels was redirected towards the national collaborative curriculum action in developing the Curriculum Statements and Profiles for Australian schools.

When South Australian teachers and curriculum officers realised the focus of attention was now on the development of national materials, there were many strongly voiced reactions. Feelings of betrayal of the 'local product' were mixed with a certain knowledge that it was crucial to be part of the national debate and that the quality of the South Australian Attainment Levels and their design could profoundly influence the national model. This ensuing period of transition was taxing for teachers and curriculum officers. South Australia contributed very actively to the development of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles whilst maintaining a commitment to the Attainment Levels in the event that the national materials did not eventuate or were considered to be not of sufficient quality for South Australian schools.

In 1993 the most frequently asked question was, 'Why continue with familiarisation with the Attainment Levels this year when we are moving towards the adoption of the nationally developed Curriculum Statements and Profiles?' Schools were required to start implementing the Attainment Levels while hearing about and in many cases contributing to the development of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles. The education system was caught in a waiting game. If the nationally developed materials did not eventuate or were not of an acceptable standard or the political situation changed, South Australia had to be in a position of being able to continue to use the Attainment Levels. Or, if all eight sets of the nationally developed Curriculum Statements and Profiles were developed as planned and were considered useful to South Australia, the system had to be able to make the transition with the least possible trauma.

The South Australian Institute of Teachers (SAIT), the teachers' union, banned involvement in implementing the Attainment Levels or the Curriculum Statements and Profiles, viewing both as economic rationalist checking up mechanisms rather than as means of curriculum renewal and reform. Differential reaction to this union ban resulted in the majority of primary schools and teachers continuing to be involved whilst some withdrew.

In spite of the tensions of trying to maintain both the state and national collaborative initiatives and the resultant lack of clear direction for schools, the fact that South Australia had already put its toe in the water by developing the Attainment Levels meant that the system was well placed to move to the adoption of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles when these were made curriculum policy.

Curriculum support staff were able to write with confidence that:

> the nationally developed Curriculum Profiles in each of the eight areas of study have a high degree of similarity to the South Australian Attainment Levels. Both the Attainment Levels and the Curriculum Profiles
>
> - are standards referenced
> - value teacher judgement
> - provide a tool for teachers to describe student achievement to both parents and the system
> - articulate expected learning outcomes of students in all areas of study
> - are descriptions of the progression of learning typically undertaken by students
> - provide a common reporting framework

- address the need for accountability in educationally defensible ways.[24]

These similarities were not a consequence of chance but of successful influence on the national model.

Adoption of the national curriculum materials

In July 1993, as described in chapter 1, the completed nationally developed Curriculum Statements and Profiles were presented to the meeting of State and Federal Education Ministers and Directors-general, the Australian Education Council (AEC), in Perth, Western Australia. The composition of this group had changed radically in the previous six months following state elections, to now include a majority of Liberal ministers instead of a majority of Labor ministers. Instead of taking the opportunity of adopting a common Australian curriculum framework as described by the documents, the group made the decision to refer the materials to the individual states and territories to use as they saw appropriate. Following the meeting the South Australian Labor Minister of Education, Employment and Training, Susan Lenehan, issued a press release saying:

> South Australia is ready to move to the next stages in implementing the national Profiles and will be entering into bilateral agreements with the Commonwealth to move to the next phase of implementation … Implementation of the national Profiles will occur in South Australia at a pace with which schools and their communities are confident … It will be done with the clear understanding that consultation, review and refinement will be an essential factor in the implementation process.[25]

Many in South Australia were confused by the decision of the AEC. Was the whole Curriculum Statements and Profiles initiative to be abandoned? Would South Australia return to plans to use the Attainment Levels? The decision of the AEC was used by some South Australians to justify failure to engage with either the Attainment Levels or the Curriculum Statements and Profiles. Some schools persisted in the hope that it would all just go away. Many schools, however, continued on their planned program of curriculum change using the Attainment Levels as interim materials and wherever possible using copies of the draft Curriculum Statements and Profiles. The Open Access College, for example, with teams of course writers writing programs of work for its 2000 students, used draft consultation copies of the national materials throughout 1993.

During term 1 1994, copies of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles in all eight areas of study were distributed to teachers in South Australian government schools and to all education support sites, to maintain the carriage of the controversial curriculum review and reform initiative and as official replacements of the Attainment Levels documents. The teachers union responded to the large distribution and the watershed moment in curriculum history, comparable perhaps with Albie Jones' 'Freedom and Authority in Schools' memorandum, with the headline in the teachers' journal: '48 tonnes and what have you got?'[26]

Review Reference Groups

At the end of 1993 the South Australian government changed. The Liberal government took up office with a very public commitment to the introduction of basic skills testing in two year levels in primary school. This commitment added another dimension to the plans for monitoring student achievement in government schools.

The Minister requested that Review Reference Groups be set up to examine each of the Curriculum Statement and Profile documents for errors, omissions and inappropriate emphases.

In a circular to all principals the Chief Executive outlined the membership and the broad outcomes of the deliberations of the Review Reference Groups:

> The Review Reference Groups (RRGs) were representative of a wide range of groups and individuals with an interest in education in South Australia. They included principals, classroom teachers, university academics, curriculum and schools division's personnel, representatives from Catholic education, independent schools, and business and industry groups.
>
> Generally speaking all RRGs endorsed the statements and profiles for Australian schools as worthwhile curriculum frameworks for the compulsory years of schooling in South Australia. As would be expected in groups of people with diverse interests and perspectives, in a couple of RRGs some opinions counter to this were also expressed but these were in the minority.[27]

A report from each of the RRGs was attached to the circular. Although the overall outcome was one of support for the continued use of the materials, the strength of the endorsement varied from one area of study to another:[28]

> *The arts* - The arts RRG believes that the documents are useful in supporting the teaching and learning of the arts R - 10 and that their use in South Australian schools should proceed provided that 1) significant support for teachers, including human and material resources, training and development in implementing the statement and profile at both primary and secondary levels is provided and 2) that the documents are rewritten at a future time and the recommendations made in relation to errors, omissions and inappropriate emphases and information gained through monitoring their use in schools informs such a revision.
>
> *English* - The statement and profile have potential to foster significant renewal of English teaching in the South Australian context. The strengths of the materials far outweigh the issues of concern that were raised by the RRG. Productive implementation of the documents in South Australian schools requires the kinds of monitoring and support identified [in this report].
>
> *Health and physical education* - The health and physical education statement and profile provide for the first time a curriculum framework for this learning area. Implementation of the documents in South Australian schools requires close monitoring and support as mentioned [in this report].

> *Languages other than English* - The review group endorsed the concept of the statement and profile as a significant resource in assisting teachers to plan, monitor, assess and report on long term progress made by students in languages learning in schools. It was highlighted that the statements and profiles constitute an hypothesis of progress which must be refined in the light of an implementation process and classroom experience.
>
> *Mathematics* - The RRG recognised that the statement and profile alone were not intended to be a sufficient package for teachers to develop and implement curriculum.
>
> *Science* - Most members of the RRG concluded that given significant support and teacher training and development, the science statement and profile for Australian schools provide an agreed framework for science teaching and a focus on student learning in science that has the potential to impact positively on R-10 schooling.
>
> *Studies of society and environment* - The RRG agreed that the curriculum described in the studies of society and environment statement and profile is a step forward in curriculum development in South Australia. The major recommendation of the RRG Report was that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures strand organiser outcomes and pointers be replaced by the outcomes and pointers developed by the South Australian Aboriginal Education Unit.
>
> *Technology* - The technology RRG agreed that the documents were useful in supporting the teaching and learning of technology R-10. The group was unanimous that the implementation proceed. However the issues raised highlighted the need for appropriate support and monitoring to successfully implement the technology statement and profile in South Australian schools.

Within the informal commentary by some members of the reference groups, there were attitudes similar to those being described as occurring within the New Standards movement in the United States:

> The mainstream of the educational establishment, trained and engrossed in the means rather than the academic content of education, instinctively resists any reform that starts with content and then lets it shape everything else—most certainly the means.[29]

The recommendations of the Review Reference Groups significantly influenced the work of the Curriculum Division during 1994 and 1995. In particular, they influenced the content of support materials developed for each area of study and the focus of training and development sessions. The recommendations also provided specific direction for review and evaluation activities, acting as clearly articulated prompts for change.

Review and reform using the Curriculum Statements and Profiles

During 1994, the components of curriculum review and reform supported by the Curriculum Statements and Profiles were further explored and clarified. As schools used the documents, the complementary roles of curriculum planning and monitoring student achievement were more clearly described, as were the complementary functions of the two sets of documents.

Stehn has described Curriculum review and reform as:

> an integrated process of curriculum change which impacts on planning and programming and monitoring student achievement. It includes changes to pedagogy, to curriculum content, to planning and programming, to assessment and reporting practices and to school organisation. Each of these types of changes are undertaken with a view to their impact on the others and are linked with the common thread of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles as the central resource. All are informed by actual information about student achievement.
>
> [Within the context of curriculum review and reform], monitoring student achievement is defined as the process of gathering information at classroom, school and system levels on what students know, understand and can do and then using that information to improve learning and curriculum provision.[30]

The first consolidated exposition of the uses of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles to support curriculum review and reform was in the support document *Statements and Profiles into Practice: Improving Student Learning Outcomes*[31] which was distributed to all schools during 1994. The document defined curriculum review and reform, identified the improvement of student learning outcomes as its purpose and gave some practical examples of using the Curriculum Statements and Profiles to support planning, programming, assessment, record keeping and reporting in each of the eight areas of learning.

Through the development and conduct of system-wide training and development activities during 1995, the curriculum review and reform model was further debated and refined.[32]

The South Australian curriculum review and reform model has as a central premise the trustworthiness of teachers' professional judgements. Professional judgement is used by teachers to:

- make decisions about details of teaching and learning programs with their students and colleagues at the local level, within the broad system wide frameworks;
- devise assessment tasks according to the nature of the learning activity;
- keep a variety of records of students' learning progress; and
- make decisions about students' levels of achievement.

Legacies of the Attainment Levels

There were legacies of the earlier work on the Attainment Levels which influenced progress on the expansion of the curriculum review and reform model—some beneficial, but one in particular, a hindrance.

The Attainment Levels covered all eight areas of study. From 1990 on, there has been an assumption that this is a whole-of-curriculum initiative—one that values all eight learning areas. The option of starting with one area of study and working through the rest year by year was never seriously considered in South Australia. Whilst this undoubtably increased the workload of the initiative, the assumption was carried through into the implementation of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles. The approach had the benefit of revitalising support for some curriculum areas, such as the arts and technology. It also has brought to the fore issues associated with integrated curriculum and how to teach all eight areas of study. The whole-of-curriculum approach has meant that the primary focus has been on curriculum review and reform, on the curriculum processes of programming, assessment and reporting, rather than on particular curriculum areas such as English or mathematics. It has also compacted the timeline for reporting against the Curriculum Profiles.

The Attainment Levels were replaced by the Curriculum Profiles. Because of this , there was initially a tendency to ignore the Curriculum Statements and to use the Curriculum Profiles as a programming or curriculum development framework as well as a reporting framework. This, in its extreme form, lent itself to a narrowing of curriculum provision and a use of the profile outcomes as curriculum determinants rather than as being illustrative of student achievement at particular levels.

Joint emphasis on the Statement and the Profile

The debate about the comparative uses of the two sets of documents has been a challenging and revitalising aspect of implementation.

The Curriculum Statements are promoted as curriculum development frameworks, supporting curriculum planning and teacher programming. The Curriculum Profiles are promoted as a reporting framework, an outline in progressive levels of achievement of the types of outcomes that students would achieve if they participated in the curriculum broadly described in the Curriculum Statements.

DECS describes the Curriculum Statements and the Curriculum Profiles as together supporting the whole curriculum review and reform process—planning, programming, recording, assessment, reporting and review. A focus on either curriculum planning and programming or on monitoring student achievement alone, is unbalanced, as is a focus on either the Curriculum Statements, or curriculum inputs, or the Curriculum Profiles, or learning outcomes, alone. DECS has proceeded with a joint emphasis on both curriculum inputs and learning outcomes. This approach provides a point of contrast with others using the documents, where:

> typically, the curriculum statements are being overlooked. Perhaps the more abstract content of these documents is perceived as having less applicability to schools. The curriculum profiles are seen to offer more direct practical help in developing teaching programs. The outcomes education bandwagon may be, at the moment, a hearse for deeper curriculum matters embodied in the curriculum statements. Philosophical considerations, curriculum principles, socially valued knowledge, matters of social justice and theories of learning are

> not regarded as pragmatic tools to help teachers prepare their day-to-day or longer term programs.[39]

South Australia has aimed to use a constructivist, rather than a behaviourist approach to curriculum review and reform, in both the development of materials and in their uses.

A negotiated implementation pathway

Consultation with schools has been a constant feature of the curriculum review and reform initiative. In the opinion of some there has not been enough. Others have been frustrated by the changes to the implementation plans resulting from the consultations. It has seemed at times that for each person applauding the central support groups for their responsiveness to voiced concerns, there was another criticising the same groups for their lack of decisiveness. The tension between the two has been productive and generative.

Much of the focus of the consultations was on the reporting part of the initiative—its purposes, nature and timeline. The uses of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles for planning and programming have evolved through relatively comfortable experimentation. The more controversial uses of the Curriculum Profiles for reporting are being chiselled into being through contest and compromise.

Since 1990 there have been consultations on both the Attainment Levels and the Curriculum Statements and Profiles documents in draft; two trials in using computer software to store and process achievement information; an illustrative case study of the process of collection, analysis and reporting of achievement information; three statewide consultations on implementation plans and the uses of achievement information; review reference groups for each of the areas of learning; eleven school-based development projects investigating particular uses of the materials; and an evaluation of the implementation by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

During this time there have been three Ministers for Education in South Australia, four Chief Executives and three Directors of Curriculum.

As a result of the consultation processes there have been amendments and refinements to the materials and their uses. More dramatically, there have been three changes to the reporting implementation timeline.

Consultations, negotiations and evaluation

The Monitoring Student Achievement (previously Attainment Levels and Attainment Levels/National Profiles) Reference Committee and the negotiation meetings between SAIT and the Department have been the major forums within which the implementation pathways have been discussed.

The Monitoring Student Achievement (MSA) Reference Committee is chaired by the Executive Director of Curriculum and consists of representatives from each of the principals' associations, two representatives from each of the two parents' associations, two representatives from SAIT, a district superintendent and three Curriculum Division officers. The committee has met between four and six times a year since 1990. The committee has provided advice on most aspects of the curriculum review and reform initiative.

The negotiation meetings with the teachers' union have varied in regularity according to the urgency of the topic and the nature of industrial action being taken by the union. Union officials have met with the Minister for Education and Children's Services, the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Curriculum on different occasions.

In 1993 there were statewide consultations on two documents developed by groups of curriculum officers, teachers and principals: a Monitoring Student Achievement Management Plan which contained, among other things, an implementation timeline and responsibility statements, and a document titled 'The collection and use of student achievement data'.

Subsequent to this consultation, four broad outcomes were identified for achievement by the end of 1994.[34] These outcomes were that:

- teachers have an understanding of the purpose, structure and terminology of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles;
- school and non-school based personnel understand the implications of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles for teacher practice and curriculum delivery. This will include investigating key aspects such as programming, assessing, recording and reporting;
- schools have included the implementation of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles within their curriculum management plans; and
- school and non-school based personnel have considered the use of achievement information for improving students' learning outcomes.

These objectives were achieved to different degrees by schools.

The first consultation on the collection and use of student achievement data, being a topic more contested and of newer substance, was followed by strong union activity and, within the Department, the formation of a Reporting on Student Achievement Working Group (ROSAWG). The members of the working group undertook another consultation and, on the basis of that information, formulated recommendations to the Chief Executive on the timeline and nature of system-level reporting of levels of achievement. From these recommendations came a further change to the implementation timeline, a commitment to sampling rather than doing a census collection of state data and the directive to develop a code of conduct for the collection and use of student achievement information.

A *Curriculum Statements and Profiles Implementation Support Plan 1995-1997*[35] was developed during 1994 by a cross-divisional working group and through discussion within the MSA Reference Committee. It drew on the outcomes of the consultations and the experience of schools as they used the materials. The plan identified key procedures for implementation of curriculum review and reform in all schools while allowing for flexibility. It combined curriculum discussion and action planning and outlined support available. It identified five outcomes to be achieved over the three years:

> *Outcome 1:* Schools have implemented a process of curriculum review and reform using the Curriculum Statements and Profiles. Focus has been on programming, methodology, review and alignment, assessment, recording and reporting and offering a broad and balanced curriculum.
>
> *Outcome 2:* Schools have planned, monitored and reviewed a process for the implementation of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles.
>
> *Outcome 3:* Schools have gathered, collated and reported on student achievement against the Curriculum Profiles according to the specified timeline.
>
> *Outcome 4:* Schools have implemented processes for using student achievement information to improve teaching and learning outcomes for students at classroom and school level. Focus has been on individual students, targeted groups, year levels and areas of study.
>
> *Outcome 5:* Schools have implemented a program of student, parent and community information that relates to statements and profiles.[36]

Progress on the achievement of these outcomes is described in the Australian Council for Educational Research evaluation report provided to the Chief Executive at the end of 1995. The evaluation, involving teachers from 130 schools and their responses to 22 questions, was managed by a small group consisting of two Curriculum Division officers, a member of the Quality Assurance Unit and two principals. A very high response rate (approximately 86 per cent) to the survey indicated the commitment of South Australian educators to getting this initiative right. There was strong endorsement for the Curriculum Statements and Profiles and curriculum review and reform:

> Many principals and teachers commented on the positive aspects of curriculum review, which at some schools had not occurred to this level for a number of years.[37]

There were also many clear messages about how implementation could be improved:

> Many principals and teachers expressed strong concern over the amount of time and energy that has been required of staff during the implementation process, describing themselves or colleagues as exhausted, overwhelmed and overloaded. It also appears that there are differences within schools, with some departments or teachers lagging behind others. Respondents were also concerned with the complexity of the documents and the perceived ongoing complexity of the reporting process to be undertaken in 1996.[38]

The consequences of the evaluation for the implementation plan were discussed within the MSA Reference Committee. Resultant decisions, in particular changes to the reporting timeline, were outlined in a detailed circular to all principals at the beginning of the 1996 school year.[39] The changes were premised on four general principles:

- work undertaken should be manageable by teachers and schools;
- some choice and flexibility at individual sites is a strong basis for schools to plan and monitor the implementation process;
- greater consistency in implementation will maximise collaborative work between schools and fulfil parents' expectations with regard to reporting against the profiles; and
- well publicised and timely support to schools strengthens implementation.

The ACER conducted a follow-up evaluation late in 1996.

Support for implementation

Implementation of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles has been kept moving by teachers' and curriculum officers' commitment to trialing and adapting ideas to improve practice. Within schools and clusters of schools, progress has been shared and analysed. Schools have committed a large amount of time and expertise in making the Curriculum Statements and Profiles useful supports for improvements in teaching and learning. Two instalments of cash grants to schools, ranging from $141 to $8904, supported school-based action. A range of system projects has complemented the school-based action.

Teaching and Learning Team

The Teaching and Learning Team is a small group of seconded teachers whose task has been to support schools in the achievement firstly of the 1994 outcomes and now of the five outcomes for 1995-1997. There are 14 Teaching and Learning Team members and approximately 15000 teachers in South Australian government schools. Team members, therefore, have to be strategic and targeted in the way that they operate.

The team members provide training and development activities on the Curriculum Statements and Profiles and their uses. Their mini courses for curriculum leaders in schools range from familiarisation with the documents themselves to how to use aggregated student data to inform curriculum planning. An important ongoing role for the Teaching and Learning Team is developing shared understandings across the state of the component parts of a very complex curriculum change initiative.

Assessment and Reporting policy

The implementation of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles brought to the fore issues associated with assessment and reporting. It was obvious that the previously published position paper on student assessment[40] needed to be replaced with a more current and definitive policy statement. Through generative and consultative processes, curriculum officers, teachers and principals wrote an Assessment and Reporting Policy for Schools during 1994 and 1995.

A number of points in the policy statement specifically support the uses of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles:

> Teachers' professional judgements will be an essential component of assessment and reporting processes.
>
> Assessment information will be used at classroom and school levels to inform decision-making about learning programs and priorities for curriculum development.
>
> Planned reporting by teachers to students and parents will occur a minimum of three times a year. For students in Years 1-10, one of these reports will provide information about achievement against the profiles.
>
> The education system will report on student performance to students and parents and provide regular reports to fulfil a commitment to public accountability and to assist in curriculum review and reform. The release of information will be in accordance with an agreed code of conduct for using student achievement information.[41]

The *Code of Conduct for Using Student Achievement Information* was included as an appendix to the policy which has now been circulated to all DECS schools and sites.

National Professional Development Program

In 1994 the federal Department of Employment, Education and Training, now the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, funded a National Professional Development Program which provided support for approximately 1800 South Australian teachers to explore the Curriculum Statements and Profiles and their classroom application. The ten major projects in South Australia in 1994 implemented by the professional associations grew to 20 in 1995 with increased funding of approximately $1 million managed by a South Australian consortium of tertiary institutions, professional associations and the state and private education systems. The program enabled professional associations to expand their training and development activities and to collaborate in new ways across the traditional divides of subjects, levels of schooling and the areas of study.

Software development

The record keeping associated with the use of the Curriculum Profiles in reporting student achievement has given impetus to electronic creativity. A number of schools have developed software that assists in this process. The quest throughout this software development has been to create programs which do justice to the richness and range of student achievement information and, most critically, which do not encourage 'checklisting'.

At the system level a locally-developed school administration software package has been installed in all South Australian government schools. The package is known as EDSAS.[42] There are three base modules which were designed to record school details, student records and staff records. In addition, a Profiles Module has been developed to assist in the collection and analysis of students' Curriculum Profile levels of achievement. Trial schools, a representative sponsor group, members of the EDSAS team, the Quality Assurance Unit and the Curriculum Division worked together to develop and refine the module.

Parent support

The two parent associations in South Australia have worked closely with the department in the implementation of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles. They have conducted seminars for parents and produced successful information brochures for distribution to all parents of students in government schools.

The 1996 updated version of the EDSAS profiles module contains plain English descriptions of achievement in each of the strands at each level of achievement in each area of study for reporting to parents. These 'translations' were developed during 1996 in a cooperative project with the two parent associations, supported by funding from the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs. The materials are also being trialed in the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland.

Support projects

Since the writing and distribution of the Attainment Levels and the Curriculum Statements and Profiles a major focus of Curriculum Division work has been the production of curriculum materials which support schools as they use the materials. At the time of writing, since mid 1994 40 different publications aimed at supporting the implementation of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles have been distributed free to schools with approximately 57 more in development. The publications which provide practical sample programs of work have been the ones considered by teachers as most needed.[43]

Since 1991 the Curriculum Division has published a regular teachers' newsletter on experiences and information associated with using first the Attainment Levels and then the Curriculum Statements and Profiles. Ten resource papers on issues such as programming, reporting and using student achievement information have been published.[44]

The development and implementation of the curriculum review and reform model in South Australia has been generative and participatory. As Garth Boomer directed in 1991, the materials and processes were to be developed by teachers, out of teacher practices. For those who wanted simply to be told what to do this has proved difficult. They have described the Department as indecisive, and not participated in the development and improvement of the range of uses for the Curriculum Statements and Profiles.

The funding of school-based development projects has been a key strategy in the implementation process since the beginning of 1994. The focus of the projects is the particularly problematic areas in the implementation of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles. Schools are selected and resourced to investigate and develop good practices in the identified areas. Their processes and findings are documented and published for all schools. Projects so far have focused on transition from Years 2 to 3, and Years 7 to 8, assessment and reporting, using student achievement information, integrated curriculum and providing a balanced curriculum. The projects have been effective in changing practice in the participating schools. To what extent their investigations benefit other schools is less certain and is, to some extent, dependent on the accessibility and usefulness of the resultant publications.

The Integrated Curriculum Project in 1994 was established to investigate the ways in which the Curriculum Statements and Profiles can be used to support an integrated approach to teaching the different areas of the curriculum. Burton School was one of the schools involved in the project. Nine teachers in the school were involved in the Integrated Curriculum Project. With a small amount of support, the teachers identified the following as outcomes of two terms' work:[45]

- teachers had aligned their existing teaching and learning programs to the Statements and Profiles and the Essential Skills and Understandings (identified in the policy document 'Educating for the Twenty-first Century');
- teachers were more confident in using the Statements and Profiles for planning, programming, assessing and reporting;
- teachers were more aware of common features relating to content, skills and processes across curriculum areas;
- teachers developed a comprehensive teaching program;
- teachers developed, implemented and critically reviewed integrated learning programs;
- teachers developed greater confidence in relevant and appropriate assessment and reporting practices;
- teachers developed programs that promoted knowledge and understanding of Burton's cultural influences and ethos; and
- teachers worked collaboratively.

Unley High School was one of the schools in 1995 investigating the uses of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles in assessment and reporting. Teachers involved in their project reflected on its impact in the following way:

> The issue of keeping records of student achievement and its connection to teaching and assessing has been pursued by an increasing number of teachers. Many see that simply keeping a record of grades is not enough. They recognise the value of keeping records of student achievement which will support them in reporting to parents, in reporting to the system, in passing information from one teacher to the next, one school to the next and which students can use to determine their own sense of their progress.[46]

Non-government schools

The extent to which non-government schools in South Australia have taken up the Curriculum Statements and Profiles varies.

The Catholic Education Office has set up an Educational Accountability/ Assessment and Reporting Working Party in 1994 to consider the Curriculum Statements and Profiles and, with regard to their uses in Catholic schools, what was desirable, what was to be required and what was manageable. Schools subsequently were encouraged to use the Curriculum Statements and Profiles.

Schools are encouraged to investigate and use statements and profiles. The Director of Catholic Education outlined the Catholic Education position on the uses of the materials in a circular to all schools at the beginning of 1995:

> The curriculum statements and profiles for Australian schools are recognised as being documents which provide a common, cohesive curriculum framework and a framework for assessing and reporting student achievement in the eight curriculum areas.
>
> ... While the curriculum statements and profiles are not a curriculum in themselves, they are a resource which can be used to enhance and develop existing programs.
>
> ... Ongoing feedback received from schools indicates that the statements and profiles are valuable curriculum resources which need to be further integrated within Catholic educational philosophy.[47]

The circular outlines a range of strategies that schools could use with the materials and the support available.

There is no system-determined timeline for the implementation of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles. Schools have a large degree of autonomy and responsibility for curriculum decision making, taking into account the needs of their clients and the goals of Catholic Education.

Catholic Education has an agreement with DECS in the provision of training and development for Catholic schools. A Catholic Education funded consultant is a member of the Teaching and Learning Team and Catholic schools have open access to all country training and development provided by the team and negotiated access to metropolitan based training and development. Through this collaboration and through the work of Catholic Education support staff, over half of Catholic Education schools have participated in training and development on the uses of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles. The Curriculum Statements are being widely used to support curriculum review; fewer schools are using the Curriculum Profiles. This reflects the fact that at present there is no expectation on Catholic Education teachers to assign a level number to students. The eventual recommendations of the Education Accountability/Assessment and Reporting Working Party may influence this situation.

The South Australian Lutheran primary schools have worked systematically with the materials. In 1994 a working party of principals and teachers looked at the documents to assess their suitability for supporting teaching and learning. The group identified a range of benefits for schools. A three year implementation plan was developed, focusing on mathematics in 1995 and English in 1996. One education officer and two seconded teachers support a comprehensive inservice program through which every classroom teacher has participated in inservice activities. Schools will be surveyed during 1996 about the focus for 1997 and the type of implementation support model preferred. The focus of the initiative has been on the uses of the documents for programming; the Curriculum Profiles are used by some schools to inform reporting.

Schools in the Independent Schools Board (ISB) are free to determine their own positions in relation to the use of the nationally developed materials. The experiences in these schools range from re-structuring the schools around the eight areas of study to other schools who are choosing, at this point, not to use the materials at all. The ISB regularly facilitates bulk orders with the Curriculum Corporation for the documents. Training and development sessions organised by the ISB have had high attendance rates.

Developmental issues

The next phase for the curriculum review and reform initiative in the South Australian government system is one of consolidation, of 'bedding down' the Curriculum Statements and Profiles and refining their content and uses. The documents will be updated over the next decade. That process will be informed by the 1994 reviews but more critically by the opinions of classroom teachers who have used the documents.

Developmental work is still focusing on assessment and reporting in curriculum review and reform. DECS support documents continue to describe reporting against the profiles as a once a year snapshot, complemented by other reports throughout the school year. Keeping that snapshot perspective—and not making it all 'more like a home video' as asserted by SAIT[48]—requires continuing discussion and strategy sharing.

Two major developmental projects under way aim to support the uses of the statements and profiles in assessment of student learning and in improving the consistency or trustworthiness of teacher judgement in the attribution of levels of achievement.

Quality Assessment Tasks

The Quality Assessment Task Project was established in 1995 in recognition of challenges to the reliability of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles in assessment and reporting. Core notions in the conceptualisation of the project were that:

- the Curriculum Profiles in themselves are not assessment instruments;
- teachers' professional judgements are central to the agreed uses of the Curriculum Statements and Profiles in South Australian government schools; the means of enhancing the trustworthiness of teachers' professional judgements therefore, should be from within the paradigm of 'authentic' assessment rather than from within a psychometric paradigm; and
- quality assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

Quality Assessment Tasks (QATs) are planned, sequenced sets of assessment activities designed and developed by teachers in the context of a four to six week teaching program. They are designed to provide:

- direct support for teachers by teachers
- authentic ways of assessing students' performance directly related to the intended curriculum
- assessment activities integral to a teaching program
- trustworthy and consistent information about students' achievements
- a means whereby teachers can benchmark their assessments against assessments of teachers using quality assessment tasks
- a means of moderating teacher judgements at the school, district and system level.[49]

It is intended to develop QATs for each of the bands for all eight areas of study. With the support of Commonwealth funding, teachers and curriculum officers in the Tasmanian Department of Education, Community and Cultural Development have joined with DECS in this task. In the long term, as QATs are developed they are to be added to a 'bank' which can be accessed by all teachers.

As teachers develop QATs, they are examining a broad range of assessment issues. Libby Braddock of Geranium Area School has developed a Band A mathematics QAT on Money. She reflected:

> ... Until I focused on assessment I had not realised just how much I already assessed nor how much of my energy went into making judgements about children's achievements ... I found being involved in the development of this QAT to be illuminating. I now have a deeper understanding of how assessment, both formal and informal, operates as a positive force within my classroom.
>
> ... I am now convinced that the credibility of my own judgement will be enhanced if it is backed up by a well planned, properly thought out assessment plan. More than any other single thing that emerged from developing this QAT was the value of actually working out, in explicit ways, the outcomes sought, the learning and assessment activities most likely to achieve them, and the assessment strategies, well in advance of actually teaching the topic.[50]

Consistency Project

While the QATs project focuses on improving the trustworthiness of teachers' judgements through the development and sharing of quality teaching programs, another strategy is to focus on shared moderation activities between schools. The Consistency (in Teachers' Judgements of Levels of Achievement) Project aims to develop and trial further models of enhancing consistency in what is understood by teachers as the different levels of achievement. Students, parents and teachers need to feel confident that, for example, a Level 3 in mathematics in one school is the same as a Level 3 in mathematics in another school. Through the project in 1996 and 1997, schools in district groups will trial and report on a range of models for improving consistency in teachers' professional judgements of levels of achievements.

Basic Skills Tests

In 1995 the Government introduced Basic Skills Tests in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy for all Year 3 and Year 5 students in government schools. The Basic Skills Tests, internal school assessments and reports against the Curriculum Profiles are intended to provide different but complementary information in building up a comprehensive picture of each child's learning progress. The Curriculum Profiles assist in tracking broad achievement in the eight areas of study for students in Years 1 to 10; the Basic Skills Tests provide some detailed information about performance in some aspects of the cross curriculum skills of literacy and numeracy at two year levels.

Using Student Achievement Information project

Another major area for development is increasing expertise and confidence in the uses of student achievement information in planning the school or class curriculum. In 1996 14 selected schools are developing, trialing and sharing ways in which profile and basic skills test information can be used along with other achievement information to inform curriculum decisions. The work in this project will bring us closer to what Garth Boomer described as 'closing the curriculum cycle'.

English as a Second Language Scales

The English as a Second Language (ESL) Scales were introduced to schools during 1995. During 1996 ESL teachers are expected to use the ESL Scales to monitor the achievement of their ESL students in ESL and to report this achievement to other teachers. Some schools are also trialing the use of the ESL Scales to report to parents. Beyond 1997, it is planned that a sample of ESL student achievement information will be reported to DECS in each of the three strands in the ESL Scales.

ESL program staff have initiated a number of projects with teachers to support the implementation of the ESL Scales. Three school-based research and development projects are operating to refine monitoring and reporting practices. In addition, two pilot schools in the QATs Project will develop culturally inclusive quality assessment tasks in ESL and one or more areas of study.

Key competencies

Since January 1994, 16 pilot schools in South Australia have been investigating the feasibility of implementing the Mayer 'key competencies'(5) in Reception to Year 10 and producing a range of support materials for such implementation.

A clear objective of the South Australian R-10 Key Competencies Pilot Project was to demonstrate how the key competencies are embedded within the existing Curriculum statements and profiles and how the foundation knowledge, skills and understandings encompassed in these curriculum documents are integral to the development of key competencies.

Content analysis of the Curriculum Statements has indicated, in broad terms, how the key competencies can be incorporated into curriculum design in the compulsory years of schooling. Many examples, experiences and applications described in Bands A, B and C of the Curriculum Statements (see chapter 1 for an explanation of 'Bands') can be used as contexts to develop and apply the key competencies.

Information gained from the audit of the Curriculum Profiles has indicated:

- the knowledge and skills which underlie the development of key competencies;
- the knowledge and skills that can be drawn from the different strands to allow for the integrated performance inherent in the key competencies;
- how the outcomes link with the key competencies; and
- how the key competencies could be demonstrated in the compulsory years of schooling.

Although the key competencies were found to be embedded in the Curriculum Statements and Profiles, the spread is not even, neither in the range of the key competencies within a learning area nor in the distribution across the eight learning areas.

Creating the curriculum: From practice to policy

South Australian teachers are engaged in a challenging undertaking of deconstructing and re-creating the curriculum. The Curriculum Statements and Profiles provide broad frameworks within which an enormous amount of curriculum renewal is occurring, according to the specific needs of the students in each school or class and using teachers' professional expertise. The amount of 'experimentation' and development might even surprise Albie Jones, the proponent of the 'Freedom and Authority' memorandum. It has been at a cost. Concerns about workloads remain a major issue for teachers and principals. When DECS comes to the task of updating the documents in the future and in sorting through the subsequent, sharper focus on entitlements and standards, it will be better placed to heed another part of Albie Jones' 1970 memorandum:

> Staff members will more readily follow a course of action if they have been taken into confidence and have shared in making the policy.

The documents will be updated in South Australia to improve the currency of their content. There is no issue of continuing implementation being dependent on national agreements. The Curriculum Statements and Profiles are framework documents for curriculum programming and reporting in South Australian government schools. Future refinements will be well informed by South Australian teachers who have used them in their classrooms.

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9 Statements and Profiles: Making Them 'Our Own' in Western Australia

Robert Randall

Introduction

Statements and profiles have not yet been implemented in Western Australia. Since the 1993 decision to return them to the states and territories, the profiles—and to a lesser extent, the statements—have been subject to extensive consultation and trialing across Western Australia. During this process, the Government decided to create a new statutory curriculum authority in Western Australia. Plans are now being prepared to implement Student Outcome Statements in conjunction with the implementation of a statewide curriculum framework developed by the new curriculum authority. Schools will start using the framework from the beginning of the 1999 school year.

This chapter includes a description of the origins of Student Outcome Statements in Western Australia, the initial period of consultation in 1993, and the processes and outcomes of a two-year trial. It discusses the roles of the National Professional Development Program (NPDP) and the Curriculum Council of Western Australia in relation to the Student Outcome Statements. Finally, the chapter provides information on proposals to implement these statements from 1999.

Development of outcome statements in Western Australia

The development of Student Outcome Statements in Western Australia had its origins in the devolution process, through which schools were given increased decision making authority for significant educational and financial matters, initiated with the release of *Better Schools in Western Australia.*[1] In the period 1989 to 1991, a series of policy and guideline documents was developed to support the devolution process within the government school system. These documents dealt with school development planning, school decision-making, school financial planning, social justice and school accountability.

During the formation of the policy on school development planning, the principle of schools having maximum decision-making discretion within the context of Education Department policy raised questions as to what was Department policy and what was simply good advice for teachers. Much discussion centred on which parts of subject syllabuses were negotiable and which parts were not.

Similar ambiguities arose during the development of the policy on school accountability. It was apparent that a shift from external judgements by system superintendents about the quality of school and student performance to internal judgements by the school raised questions about the basis for making such judgements. It was agreed that some kind of framework, specifying expected or desired student outcomes, was necessary.

It was also agreed that curriculum delivery, including the selection and use of syllabuses and related teacher support materials, was best determined at the school level. However, the outcomes of the delivery—that is, the essential elements of the curriculum—were to remain a system-wide responsibility. Accordingly, a set of centrally mandated statements of these outcomes was seen to be necessary. These would become the focus for school curriculum delivery, school development planning and demonstrating school accountability. As a consequence, the Education Department of Western Australia decided in 1990 to develop eight sets of student outcomes. The decision was endorsed by the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia through the memorandum of agreement established in 1990.

The outcome statements were intended to clarify for schools and teachers the elements of the curriculum for which they were to be accountable. They were also to provide clear guidance for teaching and a basis for reporting to parents on student progress. In total, the eight sets of outcome statements were to provide a mandated curriculum framework for all government schools. Existing syllabuses and teacher support materials would continue to provide teachers with the necessary curriculum support to enable them to assist students to achieve the outcomes.

Because of the work already completed in Western Australia by the First Steps and Monitoring Standards in Education (MSE) projects,[2] writing began in the areas of English and Mathematics. It was agreed that the First Steps project had highlighted the way in which an outcomes framework, with links to successful teaching strategies, could lead to improved teaching and learning. In addition, the MSE project had established benchmark standards, or descriptions of expected student outcomes, to be used when collecting and reporting information on the performance of government schooling as a whole.

At about the same time, all of the Australian states and territories commenced collaborative work on a Mathematics profile containing student outcomes. As a result, links were established between the national and local work on Mathematics. Draft materials resulting from the work in English and Mathematics were made available to all Western Australian government schools at the beginning of 1992. Around this time, drafting of outcome statements for the other six learning areas (The Arts, Health and Physical Education, Languages Other Than English, Science, Studies of Society and Environment and Technology and Enterprise) commenced. The Education Department intended that they would be circulated at the end of 1992.

During 1992, many government schools started to explore the use of Student Outcome Statements, focusing on the draft versions for Mathematics and English.

Formal trial activity involved more than 100 schools from across the 29 districts in the state. Invitations for schools to become involved in the trial were presented at seminars on Student Outcome Statements conducted in each of the 29 school districts at the beginning of 1992. Participation in the trial activity was optional with schools identifying the way in which they would use the draft Mathematics and English materials. Uses ranged from providing the base for revision of teaching programs through to providing a base for collecting student performance data for school development planning purposes. Officers from the Education Department maintained contact with each trial school providing information to the school and collecting information about the use of Student Outcome Statements as well as the quality of the draft materials. Many of the 1992 trial schools continued to be involved in trialing in later years, albeit with different versions of outcome statements.

WA participation in national collaboration

The Education Department of Western Australia began to draft outcome statements during the period 1990 to 1992. At about the same time, other states and territories undertook similar tasks.

Along with this work *within* various states and territories, collaborative curriculum initiatives *between* the states and territories had started. These included mapping exercises to ascertain the similarities and differences between curriculum requirements across the country. As a result, it became clear that the similarities between the states' and territories' syllabuses outweighed the differences. Given the level of similarity, the states, territories and federal Government agreed to develop 'national statements and profiles', as described in chapter 1. The national statements and profiles were intended to describe the desired curriculum and desired learning outcomes for all Australian students.

Western Australia's commitment to this national initiative was significant in terms of resources and time, but the prime reason for its involvement was to assist the state to complete the task of developing Student Outcome Statements.

WA response to return of statements and profiles to the states and territories

As described in chapter 1, the Australian Education Council (AEC) agreed at its July 1993 meeting that the statements and profiles would be returned to the states and territories. The Education Department of Western Australia then decided to consult widely across the community in relation to the draft national profiles, in order to ascertain their suitability for Western Australian schools. Primary interest was given to the profiles, as it was considered that existing syllabuses and support materials would continue to be used. The national statements were viewed as a resource that could be used when syllabuses and support materials were being reviewed.

1993 consultation

The 1993 consultation activity involved:

- working groups;
- consultative groups; and
- a Project Reference Group.

Working groups

Selected teachers and curriculum officers examined the content of the draft national profiles to see how it aligned with syllabuses and traditional teaching practices in Western Australian schools. This work encompassed all of the eight learning areas and a number of cross-curricular areas.

The cross-curriculum checks addressed aspects such as gender, aboriginality, early childhood issues and the Mayer 'key competencies',[3] but particularly the Education Department's statement of purpose and ethos, and the associated performance indicators. The result of this work was presented to consultative groups.

Consultative groups

Groups comprising approximately 30 to 40 members were formed in each of the eight learning areas. Membership was drawn from all sections of the education community, including government and non-government school personnel and tertiary personnel with education or subject discipline backgrounds. The groups also included some community and industry representatives. Each of the eight consultative groups considered the materials produced collaboratively by the states and territories to examine their suitability for use in Western Australian schools. To varying degrees, these groups recommended modifications to the documents and/or identified issues that should be monitored during a period of trialing.

Project Reference Group

Comprising 18 representatives drawn from all major associations, systems and sectors of the education community, the Project Reference Group met several times to consider the Education Department's plans to introduce Student Outcome Statements.

Responses to the draft national profiles

By the end of 1993, the eight consultative groups provided advice on the suitability of the draft national profiles. Some also recommended amendments to the materials. A summary of the advice and recommendations for change made by the eight groups is provided below. (Readers unfamiliar with the terminology are referred to chapter 1.)

The Arts

The Arts Consultative Group agreed that the learning model and the outcome statements proposed in the national Arts profile provided a suitable basis for use in Western Australian schools but could be improved. In particular, it was agreed that the *Making, creating and presenting* strand could be strengthened by including a substrand, *Using Arts languages*. The group also recommended that, where necessary, pointers and work samples should be rewritten so that they were more representative of syllabus activities in Western Australia. In addition, the Group identified a number of issues to be monitored through trial work with schools. These included: whether genuine Arts outcomes could be achieved through working in only one or a limited number of Arts forms; the effectiveness and usefulness of published pointers and work samples for Western Australian schools; and the appropriateness of a 'competency-based' model for Arts education.

English

The English Consultative Group found that the national English profile was compatible in most respects with Western Australian syllabuses and curriculum support documents, and was therefore suitable for use in Western Australian government schools. Aspects of the *Speaking and listening* strand and the *Strategies* substrand of the national English profile were found to be deficient or difficult to implement. Modifications were recommended.

Health and Physical Education

After analysing the national Health and Physical Education profile and considering the prior findings of a working party that mapped the outcomes in the profile with commonly used teacher support material in Western Australia, the Consultative Group concluded that the profile needed to be revised. The Group identified a number of major concerns, ranging from the poor match to the existing K-10 Health Education Syllabus through to poor representation of some 'essential' elements of the curriculum. In response to the criticisms made by the Consultative Group, the outcomes, pointers and work samples were rewritten.

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

The LOTE Consultative Group was of the opinion that the Student Outcome Statements contained in the national LOTE profile were compatible with syllabus documents currently in use in Western Australian government schools and that they should be trialed without change during 1994 and 1995. The information gained from classroom teachers during the trial period would provide the basis for a revision of the LOTE Student Outcome Statements in later years.

Mathematics

The Mathematics Consultative Group examined the Mathematics outcome statements for strengths and weaknesses. Despite publicity to the contrary, the outcome statements were found to have very few errors or inconsistencies and were found to be suitable for publication as a working edition. A number of issues were identified by the Group. It was recommended that these be monitored during a trialing period.

Science

The Science Consultative Group had a particular concern that content had been arbitrarily placed across the levels and hence would not adequately represent a student's development in Science. They also expressed concern about potential problems in making links between the outcome statements and existing curriculum support materials. However, the Group recognised that the profile provided the best source of outcome statements available at present, and supported its publication as a working edition for the beginning of 1994. The Group also recognised that further review, as a result of trial and consultation, was required.

Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE)

The SOSE Consultative Group recommended that the national Studies of Society and Environment profile be published as a working edition. However, the group recommended that, prior to publication of such a working edition, the pointers be rewritten to reflect relevant Western Australian syllabus documents and that minor changes be made to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander substrand. The Group also recommended that a number of key issues be monitored during the trialing, particularly whether progress in learning in this area could be adequately represented by the outcome statements.

Technology

The Technology Consultative Group recommended that the national Technology profile be adopted for use in Western Australian schools, after some minor changes. The Group recommended that the element of 'enterprise' be further enhanced in the outcome statements by changing the title of the learning area to Technology and Enterprise and that some additional text to highlight this aspect of learning be added. The Committee also considered that it was necessary to rewrite the pointers and work samples in order to provide a clear understanding of the outcomes and so that they related more closely to the Western Australian curriculum.

Agreement to a trial

At the end of the six-month consultative period it was agreed that, while an extraordinary amount of work had gone into the preparation of the profiles, resulting in a quality product, they clearly required careful trialing and monitoring in the context of school experience. It was accepted that only the experience of use in schools could answer or inform some of the concerns identified by the consultative groups. It was also recognised that purposeful activity focusing on the trial and modification of the documents would generate ownership by teachers in schools.

To facilitate such activity, a working edition of the Student Outcome Statements was produced. During the life of the working edition, the issues identified by the consultative groups, combined with a list of questions on the use of Student Outcome Statements, would provide the basis for monitoring. Such monitoring would identify what further changes were required in a modified version, which would then become a first edition of the Student Outcome Statements developed for implementation across the system.

It was agreed that the 1994 to 1995 period would be characterised as a system-wide learning or familiarisation period. It was intended that all schools be involved in some activity involving Student Outcome Statements, whether it be simply considering the materials and planning for their use in future years, or through the use of particular elements. In addition, all schools would have the opportunity to comment on the working edition.

1994-1995 trial of Student Outcomes Statements

The focus of the 1994-95 trial was on the *Student Outcome Statements: 1994 Working Edition.*[4] The purposes of the trial were to:

- determine whether the working edition of the Student Outcome Statements adequately represented the knowledge and skills that all children attending government schools could be expected to learn as they progressed through schooling;
- examine further the concept of outcomes based-education; and
- explore the usefulness of Student Outcome Statements as part of a curriculum framework aimed at defining the outcomes deemed desirable for students attending government schools and providing the basis for monitoring and reporting on student, school and system performances.

The trial process

During 1994 and 1995, the trial focused on work in government schools from across the state (63 in 1994 and 88 in 1995). The schools involved in the trial opted to do so, because they saw that using the Student Outcome Statements would assist them with an issue or initiative of particular interest to them. There was negotiation between interested schools and the central office project team to ensure that appropriate support could be provided to each school and to ensure that the full range of trial issues would be addressed. Some schools involved in the trial had been using Student Outcome Statements, in their various forms, since 1992.

There was no requirement for other schools to use Student Outcome Statements, although there were systematic attempts to improve the general level of understanding and familiarity with the statements. Non-government schools and school systems were involved in the trial through representation on the Project Reference Group and on consultative groups. Some non-government schools started using the Student Outcome Statements but did not formally engage in the trial. The trial was acknowledged and supported by the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia, which was represented on the Project Reference Group and on learning area consultative groups.

In the main, the trial work was based on a consultative problem solving process, working with teachers and school staff who had identified issues of interest to their school and who saw that using Student Outcome Statements would assist them to deal with these issues. In this way, the trial work generated examples of how teachers and schools used Student Outcome Statements in relation to issues of interest. These examples were to be documented and shared across the system so that other schools could learn from the experience.

Focus of the trial

The questions that guided the 1994-1995 trial of Student Outcome Statements were categorised into two groups. The first group, relating to the use of Student Outcome Statements, was cast into six categories:

- planning and teaching;
- school organisation;
- monitoring and assessment;
- reporting to parents;
- school development planning; and
- types and phases of schooling.

The second group of questions, relating to learning area specific issues, drew mainly from issues identified during the consultation process that occurred in the second half of 1993. The consultative groups agreed that such issues required further exploration during the life of the *Student Outcome Statements: 1994 Working Edition*.

Methodology

The work with trial schools employed a case study methodology. As curriculum officers worked with trial schools, they collected examples and illustrations of how schools used the outcome statements for various purposes. This information was used to respond to each trial question and, in turn, will inform the development of policy on the use of Student Outcome Statements.

Information about learning area issues and questions was also gathered. In addition, groups of teachers and curriculum experts came together to consider and respond to these questions and issues. For each learning area there was specific action in place to address the questions. The consultative groups also considered the work of trial schools and the advice of teacher groups.

Through the trialing process and the scrutiny of consultative groups, the Student Outcome Statements were examined to ensure that they had the potential to improve learning outcomes for students.

Overall, the consultative process included:

- work with 88 trial schools representing all learning areas, all phases of schooling and all types of schools across a wide range of geographical locations;
- a consultative group for each learning area and early childhood education;
- a Project Reference Group with representatives from principals associations, non-government school systems, Western Australian Council of State School Organisations (WACSSO), the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the teachers union and the Education Department;
- trial school workshops;
- action research groups;
- calibration to ensure that outcomes were in the right order in each sequence;
- interrogation of the outcomes for inclusivity and the Education Department of Western Australia (EDWA) strategic 'outcomes we seek';[5]
- workshops to share and develop integrated approaches to planning and monitoring; and
- a forum, for 60 teachers with significant involvement in the trial, on the use of Student Outcome Statements.

Along with the information collected by Education Department personnel and the empirical calibration carried out by ACER described in chapter 2, three tenders were let to external groups. The tenders were for a literature review, the development of case studies on how particular schools used Student Outcome Statements, and the administration and analysis of a survey questionnaire on teachers' attitudes and perceptions about the use of Student Outcome Statements.

The case studies, conducted by Quality Development and Educational Services, followed several schools through three phases of their involvement with Student Outcome Statements, and resulted in several reports.[6] The surveys of teachers' attitudes and perceptions were conducted by the Institute for Social Program Evaluation at Murdoch University, and were reported in two papers.[7] The first of the two surveys captured initial perceptions and the second gauged attitudes after a period of familiarity. The literature review, including a comparative study of developments in other systems (national and international), was conducted by Murdoch University and published in two papers.[8] All reports and papers from these three activities were published by the Education Department of Western Australia.

Outcomes of the trial

Through the trial process, it became clear that student outcomes would be valuable as an integral part of a curriculum framework for government schools, and that they had the potential to improve learning outcomes for students. Strengths were consistently identified, along with concerns which would need to be addressed in any future system-wide implementation.

Major findings —strengths

The trial provided evidence that the Student Outcome Statements can:

- improve student learning;
- improve accountability; and
- enhance teachers' professional practices.

These strengths were consistently identified and documented in the case studies, surveys and the report of the forum on using Student Outcome Statements held after the trials.[9]

Improved student learning

The trial provided evidence that the Student Outcomes Statements improved student learning in at least five ways.

- Teachers made better judgements about student achievement because the progressive development in concepts, skills and processes was clearly set out in the Student Outcome Statements. The teachers were also more conscious of assessment criteria when planning learning experiences. This led to a sharper focus on where individual students needed to improve and on ways to help them.
- Student Outcome Statements raised levels of expectation, and students' learning improved to meet them. Evidence suggests that achievement levels have risen in schools that have been working with Student Outcome Statements for several years. Where teachers have easily pinpointed deficiencies in teaching and learning, improvement in both follows.
- The use of Student Outcome Statements for planning led to improved coverage across the whole curriculum. Areas previously neglected benefited greatly from having their learning sequences described in detail.
- Student Outcome Statements gave teachers and schools a common language and contributed to an improved sense of continuity of learning from teacher to teacher and from school to school. This continuity helped to overcome an apparent plateau in learning from Years 6 to 10.

- Student performance information, gathered using the Student Outcome Statements as the monitoring framework, enhanced school development planning. The data were used to identify priorities and determine strategies to improve learning in particular areas.

Improved accountability

Student outcome statements improved accountability because they provided a common framework and language for monitoring student learning achievement. This enhanced the information being communicated by various reporting processes in schools. The information gathered at the classroom level to inform teaching and learning was also used as a data source for school development planning and school and system accountability.

Enhanced professionalism

Using the Student Outcome Statements provided a clear incentive for developing more professional teaching practices. The trial provided evidence of increased collaboration among teachers. As common understandings of the outcome sequences developed, so teachers became more reflective about their practices and more willing to share professional strategies.

Major findings—areas of concern

The trial schools and consultative groups identified several areas of concern that would need to be addressed in any implementation process.

Time and workload

Teachers felt their workloads had increased because of the time needed to become familiar with all strands and substrands of the outcome statements, to become confident about making professional judgements using the statements, and to consult other teachers about good practices.

However, teachers who have developed the skills and understanding needed for an outcomes approach report a lessening of the workload over time. They regard the benefits of collaboration with colleagues as more than ample compensation for the effort needed.

Fragmentation and threats to integration

Some teachers expressed concern that the 'eight learning area' framework could encourage fragmentation of the curriculum, particularly in primary schools. They feared a weakening of the integrated approaches which are a recognised strength of primary teaching.

However, the integration project conducted by the Education Department during 1995 suggested the opposite: Student Outcome Statements improved integrated approaches. They also helped reverse a trend to fragment the day into time slots allocated to a narrow range of subjects. Having to consider all eight learning areas encouraged teachers to look for ways to integrate them.

Early childhood teachers in the trial also confirmed that Student Outcome Statements were compatible with their 'domains of learning' framework.

Assessment practices

As current assessment practices have come under scrutiny, teachers have identified a need to improve their assessment skills so that they are better able to gauge students' levels of achievement and to plan learning experiences which will ensure progress in student learning.

Teacher development and support in the area of assessment practice will be required as teachers rethink assessment skills and strategies.

Teacher judgements

Some teachers expressed concern about their ability to make judgements in terms of levels of achievement and about the comparability of these judgements. Clearly, it takes time for teachers to be confident in making and valuing their judgements based on an outcomes framework. This occurs most effectively in a collaborative working environment.

Reporting to parents

There was a concern that written summative reporting in terms of outcome levels is not always practical. Given the broad nature of the levels, regular reporting of levels of achievement may not show progress in a meaningful way. However, ongoing student progress and achievement can be communicated in other ways using the outcomes framework.

Links to post-compulsory education

The issue of the links between Levels 7 and 8 of the outcomes and upper school was a topic of debate. During the trial, schools started to consider and identify specific levels in strands and substrands as prerequisites for upper school courses. In time this should become a strength of the outcomes approach rather than a cause for concern.

Links to current curriculum documents

It was not uniformly easy to link the Student Outcome Statements with existing curriculum documents. In some learning areas (for example, the primary Mathematics syllabus), a similar conceptual framework made this simple and the work has been done. In others (LOTE, for example), where the organisation of existing curriculum documents was different from that for the Student Outcome Statements, links were more difficult to establish.

Technical issues

Central to the trial was a scrutiny of the Student Outcome Statements to find out whether they accurately described the sequences of learning in each learning area. It was found that:

- in areas where content has been sequenced, such as Science and Studies of Society and Environment, the outcomes do not always adequately describe progression. (This conclusion was drawn by the respective learning area consultative groups, based on information gained from workshops with teachers comparing student work samples against the Student Outcome Statements, MSE data and data gained through the ACER-conducted calibration exercise described in chapter 2.);
- the wording of some outcomes needs to be simplified; and
- some learning areas have too many strands.

Key competencies

Cross-curriculum perspectives received significant attention during the two-year trial. It was recognised that there are important outcomes which are cross-curricular rather than specific to particular learning areas. Of particular significance to the Education Department of Western Australia are those outcomes listed in the Department's strategic plan as the 'outcomes we seek'. The two-year trial included an investigation of the extent to which cross curricular outcomes are embedded in each of the eight learning areas and the effectiveness of the Student Outcome Statements in clarifying the expected levels of achievement. The investigation included consideration of the key competencies because of their similarity to the cross-curricular outcomes being considered.

As a result of the investigation it has been determined that it is possible and desirable to improve the explicit representation of cross-curricular outcomes, including the key competencies, in the Student Outcome Statements. This will occur as the Student Outcome Statements are refined.

Computer software

As part of the the trial, the Education Department initiated a project to examine the way in which the use of Student Outcome Statements would assist and be linked to other school management procedures, with a view to being able to articulate desirable software specifications. This project was part of a larger initiative examining school information systems, which was considering information management requirements and procedures at the system, school and classroom level.

Some of the trial schools used commercially available software packages to assist them with managing the data and reporting student performance. This experience was drawn on during the project which will culminate in the provision of advice about essential and desirable software capabilities. This advice was not available at the time of writing this chapter.

Conclusions from the trial

The two-year trial set out to answer two specific questions:

- How can Student Outcome Statements best be used?
- Are the Student Outcome Statements right?

The significant evidence obtained through various reports and studies, and the many interactions between teachers and project officers, indicated that with time and some perseverance, the implementation of Student Outcome Statements would enhance student learning and school practices.

The trial and advice from the consultative groups indicated that Student Outcome Statements in some learning areas need refining. There is general agreement as to how this can be done to suit Western Australian government schools.

As a result of the 1994-1995 trial, it has been agreed that further refinement of the Student Outcome Statements is necessary. The table below summarises the proposed amendments. The learning areas have been classified into three groups which reflect the extent of desired changes.

Table 9.1 Extent and Nature of Further Changes Needed, by Learning Area

Extent of change	Learning areas	Change
Minimal	• The Arts • LOTE	Refine the outcomes by making some changes to the structure of the strands/substrands or reworking a few outcomes. Rework pointers and develop more work samples.
Some	• English • Health and Physical Education • Studies of Society and Environment • Technology and Enterprise • Mathematics	Partially restructure the outcome statements, including some rewriting of outcomes. Revised pointers and work samples to reflect altered outcomes. Reduce the number of strands in Mathematics.
Major	• Science	Significantly restructure the outcomes. Improve the description of the sequential development of concepts and skills. Rewrite outcomes and revise pointers and work samples.

Development of support strategies and documentation—the National Professional Development Program

During the second half of the two-year trial, the Federal Government initiated the National Professional Development Program (NPDP) through the then Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET). In Western Australia, the advent of the NPDP had the effect of engaging more non-government school teachers and system personnel, as well as broadening the focus of attention to the Student Outcome Statements.

The NPDP in Western Australia has been managed by a cross-sectoral consortium representing the:

- Education Department of Western Australia;
- Catholic Education Office;
- Association of Independent Schools of WA;
- Anglican Schools Commission;
- Affiliation of Professional Education Associations;
- State School Teachers' Union of WA;
- WA Council of Deans of Education; and the
- Independent Schools Salaried Officers Association.

For the three-year period of the program, the Western Australian Cross-Sectoral Consortium established the goal of making a significant contribution to:

- improving the level of awareness about Student Outcome Statements and developing an appreciation of their developmental nature amongst the teaching profession in WA;
- establishing the collaborative and professional conditions necessary in WA schools to support teachers in the trialing of Student Outcome Statements;
- establishing a core of practitioner knowledge and expertise in WA schools in the trialing of Student Outcome Statements; and
- establishing sustainable partnerships with external providers of pre- and in-service development and training to support teachers in the trialing of Student Outcome Statements.

These program goals and annual objectives have been addressed through:

- trial and exploration of Student Outcome Statements; and
- professional support for teachers.

Trial and exploration of Student Outcome Statements

This element of the WA NPDP program included the investigation of values and other cross-curricular concerns. There were four sub-programs.

The first two sub-programs focused on providing professional development, including support materials, for teachers in particular areas. The first sub-program involved projects focusing on cross-curricular areas such as career education, education support, heads of departments, library and vocational education. The second sub-program centred on the eight learning areas, namely The Arts, English, Health and Physical Education, LOTE and ESL, Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society and Environment, and Technology and Enterprise.

The third sub-program, involving the values review of the Student Outcome Statements, produced a document entitled *Agreed Minimum Values Framework*[10], conducted a values audit of the Student Outcome Statements, and produced advice and support material for the inclusion of values outcomes in the Student Outcome Statements and for the integration of values in the curriculum.

The fourth sub-program involved the development of innovative assessment tasks for each of the eight learning areas. These resource packages included the development of video and print materials that are designed to assist teachers to make judgements about student achievement in terms of the Student Outcome Statements. The materials will also help teachers to make informed decisions about appropriate assessment practice when planning and designing assessment strategies for students across the compulsory years of schooling. For example, three sets of video work samples illustrating the achievement of Game Strategies, Movement Skills and Personal and Social Skills outcomes were developed for Health and Physical Education. For Science a set of videos focusing on the *Working scientifically* strand in primary and secondary contexts was developed. For Studies of Society and Environment print material addressing the important assumptions underlying a developmental approach to teaching and learning along with examples of assessment items was developed. Video and/or print materials have also been developed for Technology and Enterprise, English and LOTE. These materials are not widely available, although some copies may be obtained by contacting the relevant Education Department curriculum officer.

Professional support for teachers

The second element of the NPDP program involved the development and delivery of a curriculum leadership program for school leaders and a professional review and development initiative.

The professional review and development project has been designed to:

- enable experienced teachers to systematically review and develop their own performance in relation to the learning programs of their particular students;

- assist experienced teachers to take control of their professional growth in the context of their own school; and
- establish a core of experienced teachers with the expertise to assist other teachers in professional review and development processes.

The NPDP in Western Australia played a significant role in the development of support strategies and materials during the 1994 to 1996 period. It did this through a collaborative approach that involved most of the state's key educational groups. A key outcome of the NPDP was the increased number of teachers and other personnel who have engaged in discussion on the quality and potential use of Student Outcome Statements in Western Australian schools.

The Curriculum Council of Western Australia

In June 1994, the Minister for Education in Western Australia initiated a review of the process of curriculum development in Western Australia. The review committee, chaired by Mrs Therese Temby, Director of the Catholic Education Office, was asked to examine current curriculum development procedures and processes and to explore future options which would involve both the government and non-government schooling sectors as well as the community.

The Minister cited three reasons for establishing the review process: that there be a common curriculum framework available to all government and non-government schools; that there was a need for curriculum review and development in the compulsory years of schooling; and that the community and non-government school sector should have a greater say in the development of school curriculum.

On the review committee's recommendation, the Western Australian Government agreed in December 1995 to establish a new statutory body, the Curriculum Council of Western Australia. This new agency will be responsible for the coordination of K-12 curriculum development for all schools in Western Australia. The new authority will also assume all the functions currently undertaken by the Secondary Education Authority. It is expected that the new agency will be established during 1997. In the meantime, an Interim Curriculum Council has been established to commence the curriculum development activities recommended by the review committee.

A curriculum framework for Western Australian schools

The major element of the Curriculum Council's work will be the development of a curriculum framework which will describe the knowledge, understandings, skills and attitudes that children can be expected to achieve as they progress through schooling. Schools will commence using this framework from the start of the 1999 school year.

The curriculum framework will consist of an overarching statement, which will provide an holistic view of the curriculum K-12, and eight learning area statements.

Each of the eight learning area statements will contain a definition of the learning area, a rationale for the inclusion of the learning area as an element of the school curriculum, a description of the major outcomes of study in the area, an outline of key content for the area and a description of teaching and learning processes which contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes by students. The learning area statements will also provide detail on links between the learning areas.

It is intended that all schools in Western Australia will build their curricula around this framework. It is not intended that the curriculum framework will dictate how schools deliver the curriculum.

In addition to developing the curriculum framework, the Curriculum Council will be responsible for developing support documentation and professional development plans. The support documents will assist teachers to prepare appropriate learning opportunities for students. The professional development plans will set out the type and timing of professional development needed to enable teachers to take up and use the curriculum framework and support documentation.

Links with Student Outcome Statements

The mandatory curriculum framework will articulate a set of major learning outcomes seen as desirable for all students in Western Australian schools. It will also articulate content that teachers will be expected to address during particular stages of schooling.

The Student Outcome Statements, which will not form part of the curriculum framework, will describe a progression of student achievement in relation to the major learning outcomes. They will be available as support documents for teachers using the curriculum framework.

The curriculum framework will be drafted during the second half of 1996, with the intention of making it available for extensive consultation during 1997. It is likely that groups developing the various elements of the curriculum framework, particularly the learning area statements, will refer to the national statements.

Future use of Student Outcome Statements

Non-government schools

The proposed curriculum framework will apply to all schools within Western Australia, including non-government schools, unless Ministerial approval is given to use an alternative framework. Among other things, the framework will articulate the knowledge, skills, understandings and attitudes seen as desirable for all Western Australian students to develop during schooling. These will be described as outcomes, but in a more general sense than the Student Outcome Statements. They will not be sequenced.

The Student Outcome Statements will be made available as a resource to accompany the curriculum framework. It will be left to non-government schools and school systems to determine whether and to what extent they will use the Student Outcome Statements. Such determinations will probably not occur until after the curriculum framework has been finalised.

Government schools

In March 1996 the Corporate Executive of the Education Department of Western Australia received a report on the two-year trial of Student Outcome Statements.[11] The report presented an overview and findings of the trial in terms of:

- the use of Student Outcome Statements for planning and delivery of the curriculum, monitoring and assessment, reporting and school development planning;
- implications for the use of Student Outcome Statements for school organisation and phases and sectors of schooling;
- cross-curricular issues; and
- reports from consultative groups (involving the eight learning areas as well as early childhood education and education support).[12]

After considering the report's findings and recommendations, the Education Department's Corporate Executive made the following resolutions.

1. Student Outcome Statements will be adopted to describe student learning in Western Australian Government schools.
2. The Student Outcome Statements will be used as an accountability and improvement tool in the areas of:
    - teaching and learning;
    - monitoring and assessment;
    - reporting to parents;
    - curriculum development and implementation; and
    - school development planning and accountability.
3. Student Outcome Statements will be refined during 1996, the refining process proceeding in parallel with the Curriculum Council development of the learning area statements.
4. An implementation plan will be developed for Corporate Executive endorsement.
5. Benchmarks of student achievement at specific stages of schooling will be established using Student Outcome Statements.

The Education Department of WA has begun to develop a strategy for the implementation of Student Outcome Statements. The aim of the strategy is that 'Student Outcome Statements will be adopted by Western Australian Government schools as a framework for describing student achievement for curriculum planning and delivery, monitoring and assessment within the context of the Curriculum Framework to be developed by the Curriculum Council'.

The strategy proposes the following outcomes for participants in the education process.

- Students have regular opportunities to receive, discuss and clarify information about their progress. They are actively involved in using Student Outcome Statements to monitor their own progress.
- Parents understand how the Student Outcome Statements framework is used to monitor and report on student achievement and they actively participate in the process.
- Teachers use the Student Outcome Statements framework for planning and monitoring student achievement which will lead to enhanced reporting and curriculum development.
- Administrators use information collected when monitoring student achievement for school development planning.
- Teachers use the Student Outcome Statements framework to improve teaching practices and learning outcomes for all students.
- The school system uses Student Outcome Statements information in the process of monitoring and reporting publicly on the organisations' performance against predetermined objectives.

The proposed implementation strategy presumes flexible and gradual take-up according to school priorities and planning cycles. School plans will be developed in line with the strategy's undertaking to establish benchmarks using Student Outcome Statements, and to provide centrally coordinated and dedicated support during the implementation period. Any policies related to the introduction of the curriculum framework will be developed by the Interim Curriculum Council.

Acknowledging that the detail and timing of the implementation of Student Outcome Statements in government schools will depend on the development of the curriculum framework by the Curriculum Council, it is anticipated that the next few years will involve refinement of the Student Outcome Statements and development of support strategies to assist with their implementation.

In 1996 the Student Outcome Statements were in the process of being refined in line with recommendations resulting from the trial, and in parallel with the development of the curriculum framework by the Interim Curriculum Council. Data management software will be reviewed and advice for schools will be prepared.

Once the curriculum framework is finalised the Student Outcome Statements and essential support materials will be published, probably in 1998. Training for district office and school curriculum leaders will be provided. Support materials, linking existing curriculum materials to the Student Outcome Statements and the curriculum framework, and illustrating integration and assessment strategies, will also be prepared. Professional development, addressing needs highlighted during the trial, will be provided by universities, professional associations and other sources. Schools will begin the first stage of their implementation plans.

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10 Curriculum Review and Renewal in Tasmania

Glenn Pullen

Acceptance of Statements and Profiles as published

Tasmania accepted the Statements and Profiles intact—that is, they were issued to government schools and colleges without alteration to their published form. Two main reasons account for this decision, made late in 1993 by the then Minister for Education and the Arts. First, Tasmania, like other authorities, had made significant contributions to the planning, writing and endorsement of the documents and felt that they represented a new curriculum resource which would be of value to its schools even if some relatively minor aspects of them might have been differently addressed had the developmental process been of longer duration. Second, Tasmania intended all along to issue the documents as required resources for school curriculum planning, assessment and reporting, but not as the sole, immutable and definitive underpinning of curriculum. Tasmania took the view that the Statements and Profiles as published represent an outstanding achievement in the creation of a new way of regarding Australian curriculum as the 21st century approaches. As the outcome of an excellent collaborative process between reputable educationists (among whom were many of Tasmania's own education professionals), the national Statements and Profiles are a unique, valid and authoritative set of documents which warrant intensive study and use by schools and colleges and will prove to be essential to them as curriculum planning tools.

Tasmanian context of curriculum development and implementation

The state's view and intended use of Statements and Profiles need to be understood in the context of Tasmania's approach to curriculum review and development. The Department of Education, Community and Cultural Development (DECCD) (until recently the Department of Education and the Arts) has established curriculum priority areas, each to receive extra resourcing over a three-year period. The priority areas receive specialist support in a cyclical and open-ended program to ensure that all learning areas and all special curriculum emphases (such as literacy or Aboriginal Studies) are covered over time. A schematic outline of the learning area priority cycle and reporting schedule is presented in Figure 10.1. This program of curriculum priorities as well as other related initiatives—such as the development and implementation of policies on gender education and equity in schooling—provide the context within which each school is responsible to review its own education program, write and implement its own education plan, and, in short, develop its own curriculum according to the needs of its own students, its human and other resources, and the unique nature of its community.

Curriculum Priority Cycle (Learning Areas)

Learning Area	1996	1997	1998	1999
Technology	▨			
SOSE	▨	▨		
English	▨	▨	▨	
Arts		▨	▨	▨
Health			▨	▨
LOTE*			▨	▨

* LOTE implementation plan subject to Commonwealth / state deliberations

▨ Shading indicates priority areas

Proposed Reporting Schedule

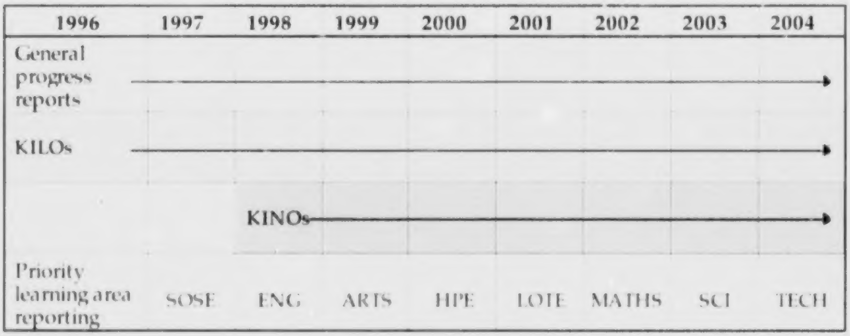

Figure 10.1 Tasmanian Curriculum Priority Cycle and Proposed Reporting Schedule

Curriculum coherence and continuity from Kindergarten to Year 12

The DECCD has had particular concern to develop coherence and continuity in curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12 and has sought ways to build on and integrate into its curriculum work already completed in two key documents: *Secondary Education: The Future*[1] and *Our Children: The Future*[2]. The national development of Statements and Profiles provided a means by which these concerns could be given particular focus. The Statements and Profiles were seen as an aid to integrate Tasmania's emphasis on capabilities, especially in Bands A, B and C (see chapter 1 for a description of the Bands) and the knowledge base of the eight key learning areas.

Support for curriculum implementation

Within this context, the Department saw its responsibility as the provision of targeted curriculum implementation resources, especially teams of curriculum implementation officers based in Districts, and the preparation of appropriate support documentation by its Curriculum Branch and its Planning Branch. Each of the state's seven districts is resourced with three curriculum implementation officers representing the current departmental curriculum priority areas. These officers work intensively with clusters of schools and individual schools, especially with key teachers and especially using the Statement and Profile relevant to their specialist field. The Statements and Profiles are therefore but one of the resources available to schools, although the one to which all others must relate, to review and renew their own curriculum.

Hence, while the Department took energetic steps to disseminate and explain the Statements and Profiles and accepted them as the underpinning for all current curriculum initiatives, it did not impose them on schools as other than the prime tool for curriculum development. It also did not prescribe a uniform schedule for their implementation by all schools. Nor did it expect, given the scope of the full set of Statements and Profiles (and the Work Samples) and its commitment to the learning area priority cycle, that many schools would attempt to focus uniformly and simultaneously on all learning areas or all curriculum fields.

The Office for Educational Review

The DECCD (then the Department of Education and the Arts) established an Office for Educational Review in 1994 under the direction of an Assistant Secretary (Review). The main function of this office is to address issues of educational accountability with a view to supporting a process of school improvement. The Office has attempted to develop instruments to monitor student levels of achievement for reporting to the system and, in the process, to contribute to schools' review and renewal of their curriculum. The Office has, naturally, focused strongly on the extent and ways individual schools and school districts have absorbed and made use of Statements and Profiles and, particularly, their use of the Department's *Key Intended Literacy Outcomes*[3] (discussed later in the chapter in the section on 'Literacy as a curriculum priority in Tasmania').

In 1995 the Office conducted an intensive review of the implementation of the Technology and the Health and Physical Education Statement and Profile. This review also scrutinised the link between the use of the documents and the availability of specialist curriculum implementation officers in those learning areas in each district. An outcome was the realisation of a tension emerging from the administrative structure of Tasmanian government education: while the central office promulgated priority curriculum areas and provided specialist professional development support staff, the districts had sufficient autonomy to be able to opt out of appointing those support staff in some learning areas. Some districts chose to focus on ongoing programs and decided not to provide a specialist officer in the field of Technology. This has meant that some students and some teachers have not had adequate background support in this learning area and that, in some cases, the Statement and Profile remain insufficiently examined and used. The Department has determined that all districts will henceforth be uniform in their approach to prescribed curriculum priorities.

The Office for Educational Review has also sought to promote within schools curriculum reform which enhances K-12 continuity and coherence. It is examining on the one hand the tensions between due focus on the distinguishing features of each learning area as contained within the Statements and, on the other hand, the blurring of those features that might occur through integrated studies that cross learning areas. Some primary schools might not be giving sufficient dedicated time to particular learning areas. Conversely, the Office is examining the implications of the tendency of post-primary schools to arrange their curriculum in broad categories that correspond to the key learning areas, perhaps at the expense of cross-curricular or 'integrated' opportunities. The Office for Educational Review will continue to monitor, in the context of its prime responsibility, the take-up and use of Statements and Profiles.

The Office researched the impact of the Department's highly successful initiative in its 'Prep Literacy Program', a program through which additional resource teachers are provided to work in every Preparatory classroom to improve students' literacy. The Office was able to document the nexus between the success of the program and the strong resourcing it was given. This research provided factual information that resulted in the continuation and extension of the program and at the same time offered a model of the level of resource support required if implementation of curriculum priorities based on the Statements and Profiles is to be fully effective.

A framework for curriculum provision in Tasmania

Prior to the completion and publication of the Statements and Profiles, Tasmania had already produced a major document to help schools and colleges review and renew their curricula. This document, called *Framework for Curriculum Provision K-12*,[4] deliberately took account of early versions of the Statements and Profiles and reflected Tasmania' s long-term adoption of criterion-based or outcomes-oriented syllabuses and curricula. After its publication in 1993, the Framework was distributed through school and college principals and district offices, thus preparing the ground for the eventual release of the official Statements and Profiles in the following year.

The Framework is a folder with four sections: Section A sets out the Department's requirements for the curriculum in all years of schooling, particularly relating to the development of a set of student capabilities grouped in five categories (personal, linguistic, rational, creative and kinaesthetic) and the eight learning areas; Section B focuses on a series of 'planners' containing lists of intended outcomes which would indicate to teachers and to students and parents that the requirements for the curriculum have been met; Section C examines learning opportunities that students should typically experience in each of the four Bands of schooling; and Section D gives additional material including information on work-related competencies. Thus, the Framework is a practical curriculum planning tool that created a foundation for the soon-to-be-released Statements and Profiles. The Department intended to revise the Framework annually, and especially after the publication of the Statements and Profiles, but this work is not now seen as necessary or practicable. The Framework embodied national and local work on key competencies.

Distribution of Statements and Profiles

The Department decided on a major and free distribution of the Statements and Profiles in the first half of 1994, initially intending to delay distribution until an explanatory folder had been completed but eventually responding to numerous urgent requests from schools for their earlier release.

Each school received a full set of Statements (except for Mathematics which had been distributed much earlier). Each primary teacher received a personal copy of the Profiles for English, Mathematics, Science and Technology because these four learning areas were at the time the priorities in the cycle and was promised the remaining Profiles as the relevant learning areas became Departmental priorities. However, each primary school received an initial school copy of the Profile for The Arts, Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE), Health and Physical Education, and Languages other than English (LOTE). Schools with secondary students received one full set of Statements and Profiles and, for each group of ten teachers, additional copies of Profiles for English (3 copies), Mathematics (3), *Mathematics Work Samples* (3), Science (3), SOSE (3), The Arts (2), LOTE (1), Health and Physical Education (1) and Technology (1). It was subsequently agreed that copies of the Mathematics Statement should be obtained and distributed and that, because the number of teachers working in the learning area had been underestimated, additional copies of the Technology Profile would also be provided to schools.

With hindsight, it might be argued that all copies should have been designated as 'school' rather than 'personal' copies. It might also have been warranted (though very expensive) to acquire sufficient full sets to provide one for every teacher. Many schools have supplemented the free copies with additional purchased copies and some have obtained both Statements and Profiles on computer disk. As part of the initiatives associated with English becoming a priority learning area in 1996, all English teachers have now received a free copy of the English Statement.

A false impression may have been conveyed to teachers from the initial distribution of a far greater number of Profiles than Statements that the latter were not considered so important, an impression that the Department has subsequently been at considerable pains to erase. All teachers are encouraged to become familiar with Statements of relevance to their work prior to focusing directly on the associated Profiles. Indeed, the Statements have provided the foundation for the subsequent intensive work by curriculum officers in the preparation of Learning Area Guidelines.

Policy on the use of Statements and Profiles for a balanced curriculum

Tasmania decided from the outset that simply to release the Statements and Profiles to schools and colleges would be unproductive, or even counter-productive. It determined that before copies of the Statements and Profiles were distributed to schools, at least two preliminary documents should be added to the already released *Framework for Curriculum Provision K-12*.[5] The first was a policy statement endorsed by the Minister called *The Use of Curriculum Profiles in Tasmanian Schools: DEA Position* (released in 1994), which outlined the time frame and emphases which the Department proposed for Tasmanian use of the documents.[6] The second preliminary document, also released in 1994, was an overview policy statement called *Requirements for Balance in the Curriculum*, which provided guidance on a curriculum in which due emphasis was placed on all learning areas throughout all year levels, on identified cross-curricular elements, and on departmental priorities including literacy and numeracy.[7]

The Use of Curriculum Profiles expressed the expectation—not the requirement—of the Department that the Profiles would be used for four purposes: to assist teachers in planning the learning programs in schools and colleges; to assist teachers to monitor the progress of students; to inform the reporting process; and to assist schools and colleges in the review of their education program. The Department made it clear that implementation of the Statements and Profiles would proceed in a gradual fashion over a period of five or more years.

The Balance Policy expressed an expectation that within a balanced curriculum every student will be involved in health education and in Aboriginal studies. It outlined the way in which existing departmental curriculum documents and the Statements and Profiles should be used to achieve the kind of balance described, and prescribed strategies and actions necessary to achieve the goal of balance. This initiative stemmed from the Department's continuing concern for educational continuity and coherence from Kindergarten to Year 12.

Folio of materials for professional development relating to Statements and Profiles

The two documents cited above were issued separately to schools and colleges and were also incorporated in another initiative of the Department as preparation for the release of the Statements and Profiles. This initiative was the publication by the then Curriculum Services Branch (now Educational Programs Branch) of a folder of information about Statements and Profiles called *Working with Statements and Profiles: A Folio of Support Materials*.[8]

It was recognised that the entire bundle of Statements and Profiles might seem very daunting in their sheer mass and volume and might not on that account be welcomed and studied by some teachers, especially as Tasmanian teachers had already undertaken recent and intensive professional development work on the *Framework for Curriculum Provision K-12* and many other policy documents. It was also recognised that the task of adequately acquainting teachers with the nature, structure and potential benefits of the Statements and Profiles was enormous and clearly beyond the Department's limited number of curriculum implementation officers. Hence the optimum strategy was to provide concise and practical information about the new curriculum documents to principals, who would then take responsibility for working with Statements and Profiles, using the Folio, in ways and within a time frame that best suited each school's timetable for curriculum review and renewal.

The Folio contained a series of papers to introduce Statements and Profiles to teachers:

- an Introduction and Guide to the Folio itself;
- a copy of the Department's document on the use of Profiles;
- a copy of the then draft Balance Policy;
- an overview of the structure and content of the Statements and Profiles;
- a brief review of aspects of teaching and learning of relevance to making use of Statements and Profiles; and
- an exploratory paper of particular significance for primary schools on 'Integrated teaching using profile outcomes'.

A major component of the Folio was a set of documents called 'Learning Area Direction Statements'.[9]

Learning Area Direction Statements

Learning Area Direction Statements for seven of the eight key learning areas were written. (The Direction Statement for LOTE was delayed pending Ministerial approval of a LOTE Policy, as for similar reasons was a draft paper on 'Cross-curricular perspectives'.) These Direction Statements were written by the principal curriculum officers of the respective learning areas to outline concisely the goals, scope and sequence of the learning area, the main implications for teaching and learning in the area including links with other learning areas and cross-curricular perspectives, and indications of provision implications for the learning area in terms of content and time within the context of relevant departmental curriculum policies and guidelines. The Direction Statements were perceived as succinct preliminary outlines of the learning areas which, being based firmly on the Statements and Profiles, would be a convenient and non-threatening introduction to the more substantial nationally-produced documents.

The Folio proved to be a very effective instrument for introducing school and college principals to the detail of Statements and Profiles and for preparing them to conduct professional development programs on them with their staff. It established a climate of understanding and acceptance of the Statements and

Profiles as important resources that could comfortably and profitably be used but which did not have to be mastered completely and immediately by every teacher or every school. Further, since the Statements and Profiles were consistent with existing departmental curriculum documents, they did not represent a sudden and alarming prescription for classroom and curriculum upheaval. The Statements and Profiles were presented as outstanding tools which would help teachers in their planning for both classroom programs and for reporting to parents on the progress of students.

Professional development through key teachers

Since the release of the Statements and Profiles to schools and colleges, principal curriculum officers and district-based curriculum implementation officers have conducted intensive professional development programs with key teachers in each of the eight learning areas and in cross-curricular areas. Some of these programs have been part of the National Professional Development Program (NPDP).

Learning area Guidelines

Officers responsible for current and prospective curriculum priority areas have been working intensively with teaching colleagues to produce learning area Guidelines based on Statements and Profiles. The first of these Guidelines was a multi-part publication for Mathematics, for which the first booklet, *Number Strand*, was published in 1992. The Mathematics Guidelines were followed by an innovative approach to Science education. In early 1996 the Guidelines for Studies of Society and Environment were published and are directly based on the SOSE Statement and Profile. These learning area Guidelines are fundamentally structured on the strands of the Statements and provide a framework for teachers to ensure comprehensive coverage of a particular learning area so that key outcomes are achieved in a coherent manner. Work on Guidelines for the other learning areas is proceeding.

Literacy as a curriculum priority in Tasmania

Tasmania has given a very high priority to literacy for a number of years. While its focus has been from Kindergarten to Year 12, special emphasis has been given to literacy in the years of early schooling. Officers with a specific responsibility for literacy were appointed to the district-based curriculum implementation unit, with literacy as a nominated curriculum priority area for at least three years. A major publication in this field was a book called *Learning to Read and Write*[10] which appeared in 1992, preceding the publication of the *Key Intended Literacy Outcomes* (KILOs).[11] The KILOs were derived from the Profiles and are expressed in such a way as to require teachers at all levels of schooling and in all learning areas within a school to collaborate and contribute towards their achievement. The Department will require system-wide reporting on the achievement of the KILOs.

The Multiplicity of profile outcomes

There is a perception among Tasmanian educators that an important response to the considerable number of outcomes within the Profiles overall is to provide schools with ways to consolidate or rationalise them, within the context of agreed curriculum priorities. It is thought that there may be value in isolating outcomes which are essentially related to learning processes from those which are essentially related to the content to be learned. Further, it is thought that there may be duplication of outcomes within the eight learning areas which could profitably be consolidated in some way. The KILOs project is a practical outcome of this perception. It has been followed by a project stemming from Tasmanian concerns about numeracy. This, like the literacy initiative, was introduced by the publication of a substantial book on the topic, called *Numerate Students - Numerate Adults,* which led to the publication in early 1996 of *Key Intended Numeracy Outcomes* (KINOs). The KINOs like the KILOs are derived from the relevant Profiles.

The Primary Project

In line with this Tasmanian initiative on key outcomes, which is both an attempt to provide teachers with a manageable objective in the number and importance of outcomes to be achieved in given curriculum areas and a means to provide a controlled mechanism for monitoring achievement in priority curriculum areas, is another project with national significance and with a basis derived from the selective use of profile outcomes. This is the *Primary Project*, published by the Curriculum Corporation in 1996.

The Primary Project is sponsored by the Curriculum Corporation and was developed initially by Tasmania and New South Wales in collaboration. Tasmania's particular interest in the concept stemmed from a perception that the Statements and Profiles tend to reflect the needs and curriculum practices of secondary rather than primary education. The basic structure of the Statements and Profiles, based on discrete learning areas, reflects the typical approach to curriculum categories in secondary schools and, while primary teachers allocate dedicated time to specific learning areas, many emphasise an integrated approach that marries more than one learning area in a unit of class work. Tasmania saw a need to develop some indicative units of work for primary teachers in which an integrated approach using topics already commonly used in many primary classes could help in the achievement of outcomes in more than one learning area while providing a topical focus likely to engage the lively interest of primary students.

The *Primary Project* publication, in three volumes, presents a model of a coherent program for the designated years of schooling but is not intended to be a complete program for any teacher or class in any one year of schooling. The 52 units in the publications demonstrate a sequence of student progression from year to year and are indicative of the scope of learning that could be covered in an integrated program within a year. The writers of the project material stress, however, that their perception of 'integration' does not mean making random, topic-based or contrived connections between learning areas: they promote a curriculum approach which is carefully planned to ensure cohesion in learning while ensuring that the distinctive aspects of each learning area are recognised and valued. They have been careful to make sure that links between learning areas are authentic—that is, that concepts, fields of experience, or ways of learning genuinely have something in common. While no specific pedagogy is prescribed for the units, the writers have endorsed an approach based on planned and intentional teaching and have framed the units to include many opportunities for students to work independently, actively and cooperatively. The writers placed much reliance on understandings about primary education contained in the 1991 Tasmanian publication *Our Children: The Future.*[14]

The units draw on profile outcomes and explicitly indicate possible outcomes to be addressed within each unit. The writers do not expect that every outcome will necessarily be achieved by every student and do not specify every possible outcome likely to emerge from a particular unit. Seven learning areas have been used to compile the 52 units, LOTE having been omitted pending local and national expansion of LOTE programs in primary schooling. It is believed that the Primary Project will significantly help Tasmanian primary school teachers, and their counterparts elsewhere in the country, to use Statements and Profiles in ways that closely match existing good practice in primary education and to see them as vitally useful resources for imaginative and productive teaching and learning. The writers also believe that some units will be useful to secondary teachers, perhaps especially in junior years.

Review of the Tasmanian Certificate of Education

The Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) is issued by the Tasmanian Secondary Assessment Board (TASSAB), a statutory body previously known as the Schools Board of Tasmania. The Board has responsibility for the accreditation of syllabuses in Years 9 to 12 using a criterion-based approach to syllabus design. This approach stems from work in the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially through the 1986 Tasmanian publication *Secondary Education: The Future,*[15] which to a significant degree foreshadowed the outcomes approach of the nationally-developed Profiles.

TASSAB is currently conducting a review of all syllabuses, in part to align syllabuses in all learning areas explicitly with the profile outcomes. This is a major and comprehensive review involving curriculum and planning officers and practising teachers and will not be completed for some considerable time. It will, however, match accredited and approved syllabuses with the Statements and Profiles both in terms of syllabus content and of consistent use of outcome terminology.

Key competencies

Another initiative with implications for the TCE involves the pilot trials of the Mayer 'key competencies'.[16] The trials are being conducted in two related projects.

One is the 'Best practice teaching/learning' trial at four of the senior colleges, the other is the project to develop industry-specific vocational entry syllabuses (VES) for Years 9 to 12, for eventual incorporation in the TCE.

Reporting to Parents policy

The DECCD has drafted a new policy on Reporting to Parents which has recently received Ministerial approval. This policy is likely to be the major instrument in Tasmania for embedding Statements and especially Profiles as fundamental tools in schooling. The policy requires schools to report to parents annually on student achievement of the strands in a designated learning area (and on literacy and numeracy) as well as to require regular consultations with and general reports to parents on student achievement in all the learning areas. The policy is the main instrument for ensuring that Profiles become, in time and progressively, essential tools used by all teachers in all learning areas.

As indicated above, Tasmania has to date adopted a strategy which allows schools and colleges an extended timeline for appraising Statements and Profiles and for taking them up as key tools for their curriculum review and renewal. While this strategy is not to be seen as laissez-faire or as even low-key (professional development activities are widespread, intensive and continuing, especially at the level of each learning area), it is true that the Department has expressed expectations rather than requirements and has explicitly allowed a period of familiarisation with Statements and Profiles of at least five years from publication.

There has been wide variation between schools in the intensity of focus on and use of the Statements and Profiles to date, some immediately using them to guide their development of individual school plans, others choosing to take them up less intensively or less comprehensively while addressing other priorities and making more use of other resources. Nevertheless, every school is necessarily directed and attracted toward the Statements and Profiles for the current curriculum priorities within the Tasmanian cycle and will increasingly rely on them for reporting purposes. The profile-related *Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers* (DART)[17] in English was used in 1996 in Tasmanian government schools to replace the '10R' statewide monitoring program. DART English was administered to all Year 5 students in government schools, where each student was monitored in two areas chosen from reading, writing, speaking and listening.

While the Department has made the Statements and Profiles available to schools without imposing immediate compliance requirements, it has clearly signalled that schools will shortly be required to report to parents on student achievement in a consistent way and in designated areas of learning. The wording and the specific coverage of profile outcomes will be the crucial elements of effective, compulsory and consistent reporting. The Department has also indicated that its requirement will not be for detailed reporting on all learning areas in each year but for a single designated learning areas each year, as well as on cross-curricular matters of priority like literacy and numeracy.

It is likely that schools will progressively opt to report on strands rather than on the designated learning area as a whole for a particular year, and that the reporting process will require all teachers to develop an intimate and extensive knowledge of both the Statements and the Profiles. The Tasmanian work to date, and potentially in the future, on identifying and perhaps consolidating key outcomes may make reporting a less time-consuming and a more effective process for teachers.

Description of implementation in three schools

While schools in Tasmania have implemented programs of varying intensity to introduce their teachers to the structure, nature and value of Statements and Profiles, some have given them considerable attention and time and see them as prime tools for their process of curriculum review and renewal. The following examples have been selected from those schools which have made a major commitment to Statements and Profiles and are presented as exemplars of innovative curriculum development at the local level. A large number of equally interesting examples could have been chosen.

Exeter High School in Northern Tasmania

Exeter High School is located about 25 kilometres from Launceston in the north of the state and caters for about 500 students from Year 7 to Year 10. There is a primary school immediately opposite the high school, giving opportunities for collaboration between the two staffs, especially for the transition from Year 6 to Year 7.

Exeter was invited during 1994 by the University of Tasmania (through its Launceston campus) to participate with a small number of other northern schools, both government and non-government, in The Innovative Links Project. This project involved a series of round-table meetings between representatives of the participating schools in what was essentially a professional development program for key teachers, focusing intensively on Statements and Profiles within the context of curriculum review and renewal. The participants met twice each term and supplemented the round-table work with additional professional development sessions organised by Tasmania's autonomous professional development provider, the Tasmanian Education Consortium Ltd (TECL).

The Acting Principal of Exeter defined four key elements and outcomes of the participation in the Links Project:

- Team building in learning areas:

  the participants focused on ways in which to organise joint planning within their school for the use of Statements and Profiles so that all staff worked to a common philosophy. Exeter made a deliberate decision to focus initially on a limited number of learning areas and chose The Arts and Technology for special emphasis. The school felt that to attempt to give intensive planning to teaching in all learning areas would be to dissipate effort and overburden staff.

- Leadership development:

  the Project enhanced leadership skills in the participants, preparing them to be more able to lead and support their colleagues as they came to terms with the implications for their curriculum of the Statements and Profiles within the context of curriculum review and renewal.

- Co-operative teaching planning:

  the Links Project examined ways for groups of teachers within designated learning areas to work together to plan teaching units based on the overview of the learning area provided by the relevant Statements and on the more detailed material from the relevant Profiles.

- Staff awareness of Statements and Profiles:

  the school's representative in the Project was enabled to act as a facilitator to introduce school staff to the Statements and Profiles, aiming to remove uncertainties about their structure, value and place within curriculum planning in the school. Exeter committed funds to permit staff to be released from some teaching duties during 1995 to pursue this process of familiarisation with the Statements and Profiles and to engage in practical curriculum and syllabus writing within the designated learning areas.

The school is very aware of the pressures already on staff from existing departmental and local priorities and has taken a relatively low-key approach to incorporating the Statements and Profiles into each teacher's curriculum and classroom planning. The Acting Principal expressed some unease about the sheer number of profile outcomes, for example, and speculated on the capacity of technology to help teachers deal with them, especially for reporting to parents. The school already uses KIDMAP[18] but restricts its use to about 20 students in each year level who have serious learning difficulties or severe behavioural problems. It did not appear likely that the use of this resource would be extended to map the achievement of all students. It was noted that the school has mobilised about 50 persons from the community to provide one-to-one support for the students in the categories identified above.

The school understands that when the Reporting to Parents policy is promulgated there will be implications for staff in writing reports using 'profile' terminology. There seemed to be some apprehension about these implications because of the time commitment likely to be imposed on staff and because teachers are perceived to be more motivated to work with Statements and Profiles on tasks with direct application to the day to day work in classrooms.

Exeter has invested much time and effort in permitting and encouraging staff, especially those working in Years 7 and 8 and particularly teachers in The Arts, to revise their curriculum and syllabuses and to write new units of work based on The Arts Statement and Profile.

In October 1995 the school participated in an assessment of their involvement with the Links Project and the associated take-up of Statements and Profiles. They used an instrument of assessment called the *Concerns Based Adoption Model*[19] to measure the various stages of understanding or implementation of the Statements and Profiles. This instrument has been developed by the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education in the University of Texas at Austin.

While the assessment highlighted a number of perceptions and concerns by staff, the following have particular significance:

- There was a general willingness by staff to be involved in learning about and applying Statements and Profiles, some staff acknowledging that the documents confirmed their existing understandings and practice and others welcoming the contribution of the documents to providing a new clarity about learning area direction and content.
- Nearly all staff saw the Links Project and the Statements and Profiles themselves as an opportunity for the refreshment of practice in the designated learning areas, some seeing this as a chance to start afresh and others being encouraged by the match between what they were already doing and what is suggested by the Statements and Profiles. A number of staff hoped to establish connections for curriculum planning in their learning area with teachers in the neighbouring primary school and in the other schools of the Project.
- The assessment process highlighted the fact that teacher reaction to Statements and Profiles was influenced by a general tiredness and feeling of stress. Teachers reported that, even though the school had provided some release time for joint planning and for the writing of new units of work, they felt they had insufficient time to cope with their normal daily teaching commitments as well as addressing the issues raised by the Statements and Profiles. Those most committed to using the documents to rewrite curricula or syllabuses felt most frustrated because of the lack of time and energy. Teachers expressed a strong desire for time to work alone to read the documents thoroughly and to develop practical teaching outcomes thereafter.
- Some teachers reflected on the difficulty of translating the terminology of the Profiles from theory into practice and looked for help in this matter from detailed guidelines to be produced by principal curriculum officers of the Department.

Exeter High School is an example of a school which has taken the Statements and Profiles seriously but has begun to implement them in a phased sequence. It believes that its initial focus on The Arts and Technology was in tune with its own internal priorities and with departmental priorities. It was significant that the focus on Technology coincided with the provision by the Department of district-based curriculum implementation officers in that learning area, specialists who could support the work the teachers at the school had committed themselves to undertake. In 1996, as Studies of Society and Environment gathers momentum as a departmental priority, Exeter will apply the processes derived from their participation in the Links Project to that learning area.

Summerdale Primary School

Summerdale is a large suburban primary school on the outskirts of Launceston. Its senior staff participated in the professional development programs arranged by the Department to introduce and explain the Statements and Profiles.

Thereafter, it took deliberate steps to embody the implementation of the documents within the context of their own school priorities and needs and to use them as a resource for the production of their own in-school documentation. An initial determination was that the focus for implementation would be strictly limited to avoid overload of teachers and to provide an exemplary focus on one learning area which would inform the later take-up of other Statements and Profiles as additional learning areas were accepted for priority treatment within the school.

Summerdale's starting point in this process was to refer to and reinforce with its staff its key document called 'Teaching and learning beliefs'. This single page outline of pedagogical understandings was collaboratively written by the staff in 1993 as the underpinning of the school plan. The document specifically refers to the issues of continuity of learning from Kindergarten to Year 6, to quality interpersonal relationships, to the concept of a community of learners, to the development of capabilities, to notions of providing for success for all learners within the context of equity and social justice, to the use of a range of teaching strategies, to the effective use of time and space and other resources, to the celebration of success, to the participation of parents, and to the promotion of an open, supportive and caring environment. This document encapsulated the staff's appreciation of the major thrusts of the Department's publication *Our Children: The Future.*[20] Senior staff promoted the use of Statements and Profiles as a resource to support and sustain these beliefs about teaching and learning.

The senior staff then consulted with colleagues to determine the focus priorities for their school plan for 1995. While several priorities were determined by staff consensus, the school chose to give prime emphasis to the learning area of Science. They chose this as their principal target because, given that the Department had determined this learning area as a curriculum priority within its priority cycle at that time, Summerdale had access to a specialist Science curriculum officer to help them come to terms with the Science Statement and Profile. There was consensus that Science had been a neglected area in Summerdale, as in many if not most primary schools. There was a feeling of inadequacy, particularly by some female teachers, about the teaching of effective science programs, a feeling engendered to some extent by poor personal experiences as students in Science and poor teacher training in the field. The school also perceived opportunities to link Science education with their pre-existing commitment to programs that foster gender equity. They had also previously given a major focus to Mathematics education in the school and perceived a capacity to build on this work through focusing on Science as an allied learning area.

Having taken considerable pains to involve all staff in the determination of this curriculum priority, the school allocated $20 000 from its funds to support the implementation of the review and recasting of their Science program. They determined that every teacher would have access to the Science Statement and Profile, that the first statement in their 1995 Focus Priority would be that 'Teachers will have a knowledge and understanding of the National Science Statement and Profile', and that relief staff would be supplied to release teachers for intensive and collaborative work on the preparation of practical units of work across all year levels in the learning area of Science.

The school deliberately chose to view the Science Profile as a tool, not as a final and complete 'textbook'. They adopted the five strands of Science and worked to ensure that each was adequately covered in each year of schooling. They developed an innovative plan to conduct a Science Fair, partly to give focus to the practical work in Science in classrooms prepared collaboratively by groups of teachers and shared amongst them, and partly to give parents an opportunity to witness and understand the vibrant learning work in the learning area that was now accessible to their children.

Summerdale produced a substantial Ideas Booklet for the Science Fair called 'Why Is It So?'[21] This contained a large number of unit outlines presented clearly and simply with the headings: Strand; Organiser; Outcomes; Activity; Learning experience; Links with Working Scientifically; and Resources for the unit. This new resource drew heavily upon and was entirely consistent with the Science Profile but had the virtues of being 'owned' by the teachers, of being linked to actual day to day classroom practice and of being a practical resource which could be shared with new staff and reused in future years. It was also comprehensible and interesting to parents both at the Science Fair and in the process of reporting on student progress and achievement.

The publication within the school of this new resource, derived substantially from the Science Profile, was consistent with the approach of the school to other curriculum matters. They had already produced by a similar process of consultation and consensus a very large and lucid document called 'Literacy Framework' which continues to underpin all curriculum work in the school. They have deliberately embarked on an implementation process that might best be called 'personalising' or 'customising' the Profile by producing derivative as well as original material themselves.[22]

The senior staff expressed some concern about how they would cope with the multiplicity of curriculum priorities that are emerging. They have, for example, after extensive consultation with the school community, determined that they will not at this time initiate any major program in LOTE. They will, however, move in 1996 and beyond to apply to the major departmental priority area of SOSE the same implementation processes that have already proved so successful for them in Science. They are confident that the familiarity that teachers now have with the structure, contents and physical presentation of the Science Statement and Profile will facilitate the take-up of the SOSE equivalents and will lead to more rapid development of practical work units in that learning area.

Summerdale has made a major commitment to the compilation of meaningful Records of Development for each student. These Records, in line with Department policy, contain information relating to the student's achievements in a wide range of fields and endeavours and provide invaluable data for teachers, students and parents. The school has recognised the value of profile outcomes, particularly in controlling the language of reporting, but stresses that it will never use the profile outcomes as a kind of checklist for reporting on student progress. They believe that many of the outcomes are too broad for the purpose and that there are unhelpful jumps between levels in some of the outcomes. Teachers will therefore use profile outcomes as a guide as they record comments on a student's current level of achievement and on their future teaching intentions for that student.

Rosetta Primary School

Rosetta Primary School is located in the northern suburbs of greater Hobart. At the time of the release of the Statements and Profiles, the average length of teaching service of the staff was just over 20 years. Senior staff were concerned that teachers would be daunted by the 17 nationally-produced documents, especially as they had recently undergone extensive professional development work to become familiar with the *Framework for Curriculum Provision K-12*[23] and departmental emphases on developing student capabilities. It was feared that teachers would regard becoming familiar with the Statements and Profiles as too massive a task and might be apprehensive that all their considerable previous teaching practice and resources would no longer be appropriate or valued.

Senior staff decided therefore to focus staff attention on the Learning Area Direction Statements from the *Department's Working with Statements and Profiles: A Folio of Support Materials*[24] and supplement these with 'cut and paste' sections of the Profiles. Each teacher received a folder containing sections of the Framework, the Learning Area Direction Statements and portions of the Profiles relevant to the levels of the students in their class. In addition, each teacher was provided on their classroom computer with an electronic version of the first four levels from the Profile for each learning area. A series of staff meetings was then held to overview each learning area, using as a resource the folders specially prepared by and for the staff.

After this initial review, Rosetta's staff decided to give priority to the redevelopment of the Science program, receiving support from the district-based Science implementation officer and focusing in their curriculum audit mainly on the Science strands and substrands. A program writing team was appointed to prepare the broad outline of the Science syllabuses, to match content to levels, and to fill in gaps where existing programs did not adequately cover strands for a particular level. Teachers found it reassuring that much of the work of previous years was still valid and was in fact confirmed by the Science Statement and Profile.

The school expressed regret that departmental guidelines did not become available for twelve months after they began their Science redevelopment.

In 1995 the school benefited from its participation in the Internship Program of the University of Tasmania whereby student teachers were appointed for a four-week practicum. The student teachers were thoroughly grounded in the Statements and Profiles and were for this reason able to give the school's teachers new insights into the value of Statements and Profiles. More importantly, the student teachers allowed nine teachers to be assigned 'class-free time' to write a new Mathematics program for all year levels. This use of the interns represents the equivalent of $36 000 relief time. Again, the writing was based on the Framework, the extensive departmental Guidelines, and the Mathematics Statement, Profile and Work Samples.

By this time the staff of Rosetta were regretting that the Department had not itself written a year by year program for its schools, not only in Science and Mathematics but in all learning areas. While many schools would oppose the imposition of a program for each primary year in all learning areas and would prefer to develop their own program from the rich resources available, the staff at Rosetta were and are strongly of the opinion that if they were told the scope and sequence of curriculum that the Department expected of them, they would be happy to flesh this out into teaching units matched to the students in their class and would be delighted simply to get on with the job of teaching. The school expressed a very strong desire for the provision of either an Australia-wide or state curriculum prescription, perhaps at least to the extent of a 'core curriculum' and remarked on the amount of time, effort and money being committed by schools nationwide to produce, with difficulty, programs which, they believe, would probably not be significantly different from each other.

Teachers at Rosetta collect samples of student work for the Records of Development and 'cut and paste' from their electronic version of the Profiles to annotate the samples both for the assessment of student achievement and as part of the reporting to parents.

Also in 1995, the school undertook an audit of their Technology program and developed three activity booklets based on Levels 1 to 3 of the Profile. The school organised a 'Technology Expo' to demonstrate student work to parents and to familiarise the parents with aspects of what was for them a new curriculum concept. The school expressed a concern that they must avoid the temptation to focus too strongly on the Making strand and in 1996 initiated a district project to produce a comprehensive Technology program.

Like other schools, Rosetta has begun in 1996 to take up the departmental priority of Studies of Society and Environment and believes that work on the earlier learning areas will make easier the task of coming to terms with the SOSE Statement and Profile and the Department's support materials.

The non-government sector

Catholic education

There are 39 Catholic schools in Tasmania, all of which participated in professional development programs to introduce and assist with the implementation of Statements and Profiles as part of a curriculum audit and the renewal of teaching programs. The Catholic Education Office, with support from outside consultants, arranged regional and cluster sessions for the purpose, focusing primarily on English, Mathematics and Science. All schools bought sets of the Statements and Profiles and many use them on disk to 'cut and paste' by Levels and by Bands to reduce the amount of documentation required to be referred to when developing year group programs or individual units of work for a class. The professional development program has emphasised the importance of understanding the aims and objectives of each learning area by giving due attention to the Statement.

In encouraging the conduct of a curriculum audit in all schools, the Catholic Education Office sought to confirm for teachers that, whatever 'subjects' were called and however units of work were arranged, much traditional practice could properly be continued as in keeping with the thrust of the Statements and Profiles, but where necessary a critical assessment of current practice and the adoption of curriculum change would be greatly facilitated by the Statements and Profiles.

In the focus on Science education throughout the Catholic schools, teachers in primary schools used the *Primary Investigations* materials produced by the Australian Academy of Science[25] and located additional elements from the learning areas of Science itself, Technology and Studies of Society and Environment.

Some Catholic schools have given attention to the learning areas of Technology, SOSE and LOTE since before the publication of the Statements and Profiles and their work feeds into the more recent implementation work of other schools. Several Catholic secondary schools or colleges have made considerable study of the Health and Physical Education learning area and have brought their Catholic perspective to aspects of this field.

In 1996, the Catholic Education Office encouraged and supported professional development programs on the implications of Statements and Profiles for recording and reporting on student achievement and conducted an introductory one-week study on this topic in March. Studies of Society and Environment was the learning area receiving prime attention in 1996.

Independent and church schools

As with the government sector, there are wide differences between schools in the take-up of Statements and Profiles in independent schools. Most teachers have ready access to the documents and most schools have participated in introductory professional development programs to introduce and explain them. In 1994, all schools had the opportunity to participate in half-day workshops on the Statements and Profiles.

One school has reorganised its educational management into eight learning area faculties which draw on Statements and Profiles across the entire K-12 program and all staff have copies of the documents relevant to their teaching field. Other schools are considering the structure of their curriculum and their teaching arrangements and some are choosing to avoid any concept of the learning areas as 'super subjects' which might inhibit the use of integrated or cross-curricular approaches.

It is reported that there is some apprehension felt by teachers in this sector that the Profiles might lead to mandatory assessment by levels and mandatory reporting procedures. This concern stems from an anxiety that assessment and reporting might encroach too greatly on actual teaching time, a concern held in common with many teachers in the government sector.

Some smaller independent schools, particularly the Christian Parent-Controlled Schools, have strongly engaged with the Statements and Profiles as a valuable resource because they see them as off-setting the disadvantage of having no ready access to, say, a curriculum branch or curriculum support personnel.

In 1996 a consortium of five schools (two Catholic, two government and one independent) have committed themselves to a year-long professional development program using a round-table model to produce five reports on the implications and value of Statements and Profiles for student assessment and for reporting on student achievement. A cluster of seven schools in the Circular Head area in the north-west of the state, some government and some non-government, is continuing intensive developmental work on the Technology Statement and Profile.

One Christian Community School has adapted the Statements and Profiles, using disk versions of the documents, to align them with their educational philosophy and priorities and have found these 'customised' versions to be a valuable resource for teaching and learning.

In summary, almost all schools in this sector are actively engaged in a curriculum audit of their program using the Statements and Profiles as a key tool for the review.

Department of Education and the Arts, *Secondary Education: The Future*, Author, Hobart, 1986.

Department of Education and the Arts, *Our Children: The Future*, Author, Hobart, 1991.

Department of Education and the Arts, *Key Intended Literacy Outcomes: Kindergarten to Year Eight*, Author, Hobart, 1993.

[4] Department of Education and the Arts, *Framework for Curriculum Provision, K-12*, Author, Hobart, 1993.

[5] Department of Education and the Arts, *Framework for Curriculum Provision, K-12*, 1993.

[6] Department of Education and the Arts, *Use of Curriculum Profiles in Tasmanian Schools and Colleges: DEA Position*, Author Hobart, 1994.

[7] Department of Education and the Arts, *Requirements for Balance in the Curriculum*, Author, Hobart, 1994.

[8] Department of Education and the Arts, *Working with Statements and Profiles: A Folio of Curriculum Support Materials*, Author, Hobart, 1994.

[9] Department of Education and the Arts, 'Learning Area Direction Statements', in *Working with Statements and Profiles: A Folio of Curriculum Support Materials*, Author, Hobart, 1994.

[10] Department of Education and the Arts, *Learning to Read and Write: From Theory into Practice*, Author, Hobart, 1992.

[11] Department of Education and the Arts, *Key Intended Literacy Outcomes*, 1993.

[12] Department of Education and the Arts, *Numerate Students - Numerate Adults: A Booklet for Teachers*, Author, Hobart, 1995.

[13] Department of Education and the Arts, *Key Intended Numeracy Outcomes*, Author, Hobart, 1996.

[14] Department of Education and the Arts, 1991.

[15] Department of Education and the Arts, 1986.

[16] Mayer Committee, *Putting General Education to Work: The Key Competencies Report*, Australian Education Council and Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training, Melbourne, 1992.

[17] M. Forster, J. Mendelovits & G. Masters, *Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers, (DART) English*, Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne, 1994.

[18] Mercator Software Pty Ltd, KIDMAP, Author, Subiaco, 1991. (Currently working on KIDMAP '97)

[19] G. E. Hall, The Concerns-Based Approach to facilitating change, *Educational Horizons*, 57, 1979, 202-208.

[20] Department of Education and the Arts, 1991.

[21] Summerdale Primary School, Why Is It So?, Author, Launceston, 1995.

[22] The Summerdale Primary School documents are unpublished and are periodically revised. Anyone who is interested in finding out more about this material could contact the principal of the school. The major foci so far have been literacy, mathematics and science.

[23] Department of Education and the Arts, *Framework for Curriculum Provision, K-12*, 1993.

[24] Department of Education and the Arts, *Working with Statements and Profiles*, 1994.

[25] Australian Academy of Science, *Primary Investigations*, Author, Canberra, 1994.

Section 3:

The National Survey

11 The National Survey of Schools

An important goal of this book is to provide, overall, as balanced a perspective as possible on the status of implementation of materials derived from the Australian curriculum profiles. In the previous section we have read about the experiences of education systems officers who had responsibility to establish the conditions for implementation in their own jurisdiction, and then, in most systems, to shepherd the process along. But what about the impact on schools and teachers? The chapter authors are all educators who at some stage have been classroom teachers, but teaching is not their current role. To complement, and perhaps also supplement, the information provided by the authors of the state and territory chapters, there were two further stages in the project which sought to document the views and experiences of school administrators and teachers. The first of these stages involved a survey, in an Australia-wide sample of schools, which is described in this section of the book.

Aims of the survey

The primary aim of the survey was to explore the current situation for teachers across systems as they grapple with the challenge of learning to use the curriculum profiles. The objectives were to explore issues involved in the use of curriculum profiles and to outline ways in which they are and can be effectively used, as well as to identify problems teachers are having which might constitute barriers to successful implementation.

Accordingly, this part of the project included two main activities:

- a survey of teacher practices and views about the use of profiles in classroom assessment and reporting, along with teachers' access to professional development initiatives and support materials;
- the identification of exemplary practices in the classroom use of profiles for assessment and reporting.

The survey was also to include the documentation of teachers' use of standardised and diagnostic tests; the ways in which key competencies' are embedded in everyday classroom activities in the compulsory years of schooling and ways in which they are being incorporated into assessment and reporting strategies; and the various technologies which have been developed to support implementation of the profiles.

School samples

Letters were sent to all state government Education Departments, Catholic Education Offices and Independent Schools Boards at the end of January 1996, to advise them that the survey would be taking place and ask for permission to approach schools to participate in the survey. These agencies were also asked to nominate any schools within their respective systems which had been significantly involved in implementing or trialing profiles.

Two groups of schools were selected as sources of respondents to the survey. One comprised a nationwide random sample of 390 government, Catholic and independent schools. The random sample was selected to ensure a proportional coverage of primary and secondary schools across states and systems.

An additional sample of 'nominated' schools was included because these schools were deemed to have had a significant involvement in the implementation process. Given the aim of locating schools with exemplary practices in their use of profiles, it was felt that the nominated schools, with their additional experience, might prove useful as possible sites for follow-up visits.

Eight offices nominated schools and an additional sample of 52 of these schools was approached. The Western Australian Education Department provided a list of schools which had been involved in trialing aspects of profiles, from which 14 primary and 14 secondary schools were randomly selected. The Northern Territory's Education Department provided a list of their trial schools, from which four primary and two secondary schools were selected. Schools nominated by regional Catholic Education Offices included two Victorian primary schools, three Queensland primary and two secondary schools, three South Australian primary and two secondary schools and four primary schools from NSW. Two secondary schools were nominated by the South Australian Independent Schools Board and one primary school by the South Australian Lutheran Education Office.

Questionnaires

Focus areas for the teacher questionnaire arose directly from the project brief. As well as the teacher questionnaires, schools were sent a School Information questionnaire to be filled in by the principal or deputy principal. There was some overlap in the topics addressed in the two versions of the questionnaire, with common focus topics being:

- key learning areas being emphasised;
- nature of school/teacher involvement with profiles;
- year levels where profiles were being used for reporting;
- use of standardised and diagnostic tests;
- use of computer technology to support implementation;

- the extent of the school's/teachers' commitment to the use of profiles;
- current priorities with respect to profiles.

In addition, information on aspects of the school context was sought from principals. This included:

- school population and levels catered for;
- percentages of students from Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander and non-English speaking backgrounds;
- percentages of students with disabilities;
- the year that profiles were introduced at the school;
- 1995 and 1996 priorities.

Teachers were also asked to comment on or provide information regarding:

- their position in the school;
- teaching experience;
- strategies used at the school to support teachers implementing profiles;
- training and development undertaken in relation to profiles;
- access to resources;
- changes in teaching practice;
- perceived benefits and concerns regarding the use of profiles;
- ways in which implementation might be facilitated.

In recognition that the generic use of the term 'profiles' might cause some confusion among teachers, especially where states had produced variations of the national profiles with different titles, a Background Paper was produced and provided to schools with their questionnaires. The paper explained to teachers that they should consider any reference in the questionnaire to 'profiles' as meaning the version of profiles adopted or adapted by their particular state and system. The titles of state variations of profiles were listed for the teachers as follows:

ACT	ACT Curriculum Frameworks and National Profiles
NSW	*implementation on hold in Government schools*
NT	Common Curriculum Statement; Common Assessment Statement
Qld	Student Performance Standards (English and Mathematics only)
SA	Curriculum Statements and Profiles for Australian Schools
Tas	National Statements and Curriculum Profiles
Vic	Curriculum & Standards Framework
WA	Student Outcome Statements

The background paper also provided a brief summary of the Mayer key competencies in order to help contextualise the part of the questionnaire in which teachers were asked to indicate how each of the competencies was or might be covered by their classroom practice and assessment and reporting strategies.

In addition to the background paper, a variation of the questionnaire was sent to non-trial schools in the Western Australian random sample and was also made available on request for schools and teachers who had had no experience whatsoever with the curriculum profiles for Australian schools or their state's variation of them. It was thought that these schools might assume that their responses were redundant and not complete the teacher questionnaire once they saw the term 'profile'. This shorter questionnaire was similar in structure to the teacher questionnaire, but with several questions reworded to elicit general comments on outcomes-based approaches to education.

Draft versions of the questionnaires were prepared at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). These were reviewed by the project's Management Committee, whose suggestions were incorporated in the final versions. As many questions as possible were constructed so that respondents could give brief answers or tick boxes. These were always accompanied by spaces for further comment. An over-riding consideration was that the questionnaires should be able to be completed in under half an hour.

Administration

The questionnaires were sent to schools in March and April 1996. Principals were asked to distribute the questionnaires to teachers in a range of year levels and with varying degrees of experience with profiles. Secondary school principals were asked to distribute the questionnaires to an English/humanities teacher, a mathematics/science teacher and a teacher from one of the remaining learning areas. Three teacher questionnaires were sent to each school, with a request that at least two be completed.

Each school's questionnaires were stamped with an identifying number, but individual questionnaires were completed anonymously. Individual envelopes were provided so that teachers could seal their completed questionnaires and a large, pre-addressed Reply Paid envelope was provided for mailing each school's completed questionnaires back to ACER.

Response rates

The numbers of selected schools and the school response rates are shown by type of school in Tables 11.1 and 11.2 on the next page. Although the distributions are given by state, the aim of the survey was not primarily to make inferences about the situation in each state. Rather, it was to ensure a representative range of school types and systems.

The NSW Department of School Education thought it inappropriate for government schools in that state to participate in the survey at the same time as the Board of Studies was working to implement the recommendations of the Eltis review.[2] Hence NSW government schools were not included in the designed sample and there was a slight oversampling of non-government schools in that state to partially compensate for the exclusion of government schools. Government schools from the ACT were initially selected, but due to strong industrial action in that sector at that time, these schools were eventually omitted from the designed sample.

Table 11.1 Number of Primary Schools Responding by State or Territory and Sector

	ACT	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	Total
Designed Sample									
Govt	0	0	38	35	19	33	7	8	140
Cath.	1	24	15	10	7	4	2	1	64
Indep.	1	5	4	3	3	2	1	0	19
Total	2	29	57	48	29	39	10	9	223
Achieved Sample									
Govt	0	0	28	14	10	9	3	4	68
Cath.	1	10	9	3	2	0	2	0	27
Indep.	0	3	4	1	1	2	0	0	11
Total	1	13	41	18	13	11	5	4	106

Table 11.2 Number of Secondary Schools Responding by State or Territory and Sector

	ACT	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	Total
Designed Sample									
Govt	0	0	38	27	14	31	7	4	121
Cath.	1	22	13	9	5	4	2	1	57
Indep.	1	10	9	6	5	4	1	0	36
Total	2	32	60	42	24	39	10	5	214
Achieved Sample									
Govt	0	0	26	14	7	11	3	2	63
Cath.	0	14	10	3	2	3	2	0	34
Indep.	0	4	4	2	3	3	0	0	16
Total	0	18	40	19	12	17	5	2	113

Questionnaires arriving at ACER up to 24 July were included in the analyses. The overall response rate was 50 per cent (primary schools 48 per cent and secondary schools 53 per cent). Four of the responding schools were identified as senior schools, and were subsequently omitted. One of these schools indicated that they do look at outcomes identified in the profiles and other nationally accredited courses in order to assist them with aligning their curriculum to an outcomes-based approach.

Six of the responding schools provided so little information that they were also omitted from the final analysis. One set of questionnaires was received after the final date. Altogether, responses from 102 primary schools and 106 secondary schools were included in the final data analysis. Of these 208 schools, 185 were schools from the random sample and 23 were schools from the nominated sample.

Teacher response rates from individual schools were good, with 150 schools returning three completed teacher questionnaires, 45 returning two and 13 returning one, yielding a total of 553. Of these, 490 were from teachers in the randomly-sampled schools, 63 were from nominated schools.

The number of school information sheets returned by principals was 204. Two of the four non-respondents were from nominated schools, one primary and one secondary. The other two were from randomly selected primary schools.

Of the 218 schools who did not return questionnaires, 32 per cent faxed or phoned ACER to indicate they would not be participating in the survey. The range of reasons given for non-participation reflected the variety of activities that schools are involved in and other pressures that teachers are faced with in the course of the school term. A number of schools indicated that they were not participating because they had made a minimal response to profiles to date. Other reasons for non-participation included a school centenary, key teachers being ill or on long service leave, an imminent school closure and industrial action. Some NSW and Queensland schools declined to participate on the basis that profiles had been put 'on hold' in those states. One Christian Community School responded that their system had their own 'Christian Community Standards' and they felt that this made them peripheral to the survey. Another secondary independent school declined, 'due to many demands on staff time at this time in the semester as well as the myriad administrative and clerical jobs required of staff'.

Characteristics of schools

Among contextual questions asked of schools were student enrolment figures, together with percentages of non-English speaking background (NESB) students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students who have been assessed as having a disability to a degree which entitles them to receive special education. Schools were also asked to indicate if they received Disadvantaged Schools Component Funds under the National Equity Program for Schools.

The distribution of overall school enrolment sizes is shown in Table 11.3. The smallest school in the sample had 36 students, the largest 1485.

Table 11.3 School Enrolment Sizes

Enrolment size	Number of schools
≤ 100	8
101-200	14
201-300	25
301-400	31
401-500	31
501-750	40
751-1000	37
> 1000	16
Missing	6
No. of respondents	208

A total of 91 schools indicated that they had students who came from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, 152 had students with disabilities qualifying them for educational support and 151 had students who came from a home where the main language spoken was a language other than English. Percentages of students varied in each category ranging up to 98 per cent Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander students, 30 per cent of students with disabilities and 100 per cent NESB students. Over half of the schools with NESB students had five per cent or fewer, half of the schools with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students had four per cent or fewer and around half of schools who had students with disabilities had two per cent or fewer. Altogether, 47 schools (25 primary and 22 secondary) reported that they received Disadvantaged Schools Component Funds under the National Equity Program for Schools.

Characteristics of respondents

Sixty-one per cent (339) of the 553 teacher respondents were from government schools, 39 per cent (154) from Catholic schools and 11 per cent (60) from independent schools.

Altogether there were 264 primary teachers and 289 secondary teachers. When asked to nominate the main year levels they taught, 26 per cent of respondents indicated that they taught lower primary students, 22 per cent upper primary, 13 per cent lower secondary, 12 per cent upper secondary and 27 per cent taught across lower and upper secondary.

Teachers were also asked about their position in the school. Forty-seven per cent of respondents were class teachers, 39 per cent were subject coordinators (mostly from secondary schools), 9 per cent were level coordinators and the remaining 5 per cent had dual subject and level coordinating roles or senior positions such as curriculum coordinator or deputy principal. Subject coordinators mainly taught in the areas of English (55) and mathematics (46), followed by studies of society and environment (SOSE) or humanities and science. English and mathematics were the two main areas from which schools were asked to select respondents in secondary schools because in many instances these have been the first areas that schools (or systems) have focused on for their implementation of profiles.

Of the 538 teachers who responded to the question regarding their main teaching area for 1996, 249 (mostly primary teachers) indicated that they covered all key learning areas or all but languages other than English (LOTE), 12 indicated three main areas, 84 indicated two, and 193 indicated one. A total of 89 teachers responded that English was one of their main teaching areas, followed by mathematics (75), SOSE (72), science (58), technology (41), art (29), health and physical education (HPE) (20) and LOTE (11). Fifteen teachers did not indicate a teaching area.

Almost two thirds of the teachers indicated that they had 12 or more years of teaching experience. The distribution of the teacher respondents by years of teaching experience is shown in Table 11.4.

Table 11.4 Years of Teaching Experience

Years of experience	Number of teachers
≤ 5	59
6-12	132
13-20	170
over 20	161
Missing	31
No. of respondents	553

Implementation emphases

Principals were asked to nominate when the school first began introducing profiles, including time spent in familiarisation. Eighteen schools indicated that they had begun their involvement with profiles prior to 1993, 16 began the process of implementation in 1993, 81 in 1994, 66 in 1995 and two in 1996. Twenty-one schools did not indicate a year of introduction and four replied that they had not yet formally begun any work with the profiles.

Principals and teachers were also asked to indicate the key learning areas in which profiles were being implemented in 1995 and 1996 and the ways in which profiles were being used—that is, whether teachers were familiarising themselves with profiles, or using profiles for programming, assessment and/or reporting. Responses were indicated by ticking the corresponding boxes next to each learning area. Although combinations of the four activities were often indicated, the responses were categorised under four main headings for further analysis. Each of the activities was seen as a progressive step in the implementation process, so if a school indicated that they were familiarising themselves with profiles in a particular key learning area as well as programming, they are indicated below as being at the 'programming' stage, or if they were using profiles for programming, assessment and reporting, they are indicated below as being at the 'reporting' stage. Principals' responses are shown in Tables 11.5 and 11.6 below.

Table 11.5 Primary Schools' Emphases for Implementation by Area of Study

	Percentage of schools							
Emphasis	Arts	Eng	HPE	LOTE	Math	Sci	SOSE	Tech
1995								
Familiarising	42	23	44	36	18	30	35	40
Programming	33	24	28	40	24	32	32	36
Assessing	3	11	3	0	9	17	5	0
Reporting	22	42	25	24	49	21	28	24
N responses	36	79	43	33	74	47	43	42
1996								
Familiarising	24	12	25	22	13	10	22	18
Programming	27	14	27	22	15	30	30	37
Assessing	11	18	11	20	15	30	20	16
Reporting	38	56	37	36	57	30	28	29
N responses	37	73	44	36	68	47	46	49

Table 11.6 Secondary Schools' Emphases for Implementation by Area of Study

	Percentage of schools							
Emphasis	Arts	Eng	HPE	LOTE	Math	Sci	SOSE	Tech
1995								
Familiarising	43	37	44	45	32	33	38	36
Programming	44	42	47	42	40	46	47	42
Assessing	5	8	1	3	4	7	6	9
Reporting	8	13	8	10	24	14	9	13
N responses	75	90	77	73	91	78	77	78
1996								
Familiarising	16	9	17	14	7	12	13	10
Programming	52	43	57	63	39	53	55	57
Assessing	16	21	10	11	23	18	16	14
Reporting	16	27	16	12	31	17	16	19
N responses	68	81	69	64	82	72	69	69

Overall there has been a slight decrease in the number of schools involved in the implementation of profiles from 1995 to 1996. Thirteen principals from government, Catholic and independent schools (six primary and seven secondary) did not indicate any involvement in implementing profiles in any of the key learning areas in 1995. The number of principals indicating no involvement in 1996 increased to 32 (13 primary and 19 secondary). This is not surprising in the light of reviews being held in NSW and Queensland. The decrease in numbers of schools involved with the mathematics profile has been particularly affected by the review in Queensland.

The most commonly nominated areas for school involvement with profiles were mathematics and English. Of the schools focusing on only one or two key learning areas, these were almost always English and/or mathematics. This is generally in keeping with policies established at system level, though in some systems schools had more flexibility than in others to choose the learning areas they would focus on. Eighty-eight principals indicated that their schools were implementing profiles to some degree (including familiarisation) in all eight key learning areas in 1996. These were mostly schools in Victoria and South Australia and included more secondary than primary schools (26 primary and 62 secondary).

The nature of schools' involvement was fairly consistent with the explicit demands being made by particular systems although there was also much variation between schools within each system. Of the schools continuing to use profiles in 1996, there was a shift from familiarising to programming, mainly evident in secondary schools, and an increase in numbers of schools using profiles for assessment and reporting, mainly evident in primary schools.

Overall, 58 per cent of primary schools nominated one or more year levels at which they were using profiles for reporting purposes compared with 32 per cent of secondary schools. Thirty-six primary schools, 21 of which were in Victoria and the others somewhat scattered, were reporting at all seven year levels. Secondary schools were more likely to be using profiles for reporting at three or fewer year levels and, if reporting was being done at only one year level, this was generally Year 8. Interestingly, the greatest number of responses indicating the use of profiles for reporting at all year levels as well as at no year levels was from Victoria.

Teachers were asked to indicate the ways in which they used profiles in each of the key learning areas in 1995 and 1996. Their responses are recorded in Tables 11.7 and 11.8.

Table 11.7 **Primary Teachers' Emphases for Implementation by Area of Study**

	Percentage of teachers							
Emphasis	Arts	Eng	HPE	LOTE	Math	Sci	SOSE	Tech
1995								
Familiarising	62	24	46	74	17	33	30	42
Programming	20	19	25	16	19	30	31	30
Assessing	2	10	4	3	12	8	9	12
Reporting	16	47	25	7	52	29	30	16
N responses	120	212	124	70	211	145	144	129
1996								
Familiarising	33	10	23	45	11	17	15	19
Programming	25	19	30	17	17	29	28	32
Assessing	9	19	11	11	15	21	18	22
Reporting	33	52	36	27	57	33	39	27
N responses	116	204	129	73	192	153	142	129

Table 11.8 **Secondary Teachers' Emphases for Implementation by Area of Study**

	Percentage of teachers							
Emphasis	Arts	Eng	HPE	LOTE	Math	Sci	SOSE	Tech
1995								
Familiarising	47	32	29	53	31	38	38	36
Programming	29	35	43	27	35	40	29	36
Assessing	15	16	14	0	6	9	12	10
Reporting	9	17	14	20	28	13	21	18
N responses	34	83	28	15	80	55	73	44
1996								
Familiarising	33	21	25	25	15	20	25	22
Programming	24	32	29	38	43	46	31	31
Assessing	10	22	14	12	15	14	13	20
Reporting	33	25	32	25	27	20	30	27
N responses	33	81	28	16	74	56	67	45

Consistent with principals' feedback regarding the use of profiles for reporting, a greater proportion of primary than secondary teachers were using profiles for this purpose. Overall, 42 per cent of the teachers surveyed were using profiles to report at one or more year levels in 1995, comprising 65 per cent of the primary teachers but only 20 per cent of the secondary teachers. In 1996, 44 per cent of the total group of teachers were using profiles for reporting. The percentage of primary teachers was almost the same as in 1995, but the percentage of secondary teachers had increased to 27. Within the five largest states, the highest percentages (about 60 per cent) of teachers using the profiles for reporting purposes occurred in Queensland in 1995 and in South Australia in 1996.

In 1995, 20 per cent of the teachers overall used profiles for reporting in one learning area, 12 per cent in two learning areas, 8 per cent in three or four learning areas and two per cent in more than four. Only a slight change occurred in 1996, when the corresponding percentages were 18 in one learning area, 14 in two, 10 in three or four and two in more than four. The main key learning areas reported on were mathematics and English. Among the respondents to the survey, the year levels reported were spread across all levels to Year 10 in both 1995 and 1996. Less reporting was done at Years 4, 5 and 9, otherwise the year levels were reasonably evenly spread.

Principals and teachers indicated up to three main priorities in their use of profiles. Most indicated two or more particular types of activities as listed in Tables 11.9 and 11.10. Some teachers, mostly primary, linked the activities they mentioned with particular key learning areas, the main areas being English and mathematics, followed by science, SOSE, technology, the arts, HPE and LOTE (in only four responses).

Table 11.9 Focus Activities for Primary Schools and Teachers

	% of school responses		% of teacher responses
Activity	1995	1996	1996
On hold	0	4	2
Familiarisation	30	12	20
Programming/planning	19	23	24
Assessment	15	20	25
Reporting	16	18	13
Auditing	8	9	4
Inservicing	3	2	1
Promoting awareness	5	3	2
Teaching new courses	1	4	4
Other	3	5	5
Total per cent	100	100	100
N responses	115	123	364

Table 11.10 Focus Activities for Secondary Schools and Teachers

	% of school responses		% of teacher responses
Activity	1995	1996	1996
On hold	5	8	5
Familiarisation	22	9	13
Programming/planning	21	27	25
Assessment	9	18	20
Reporting	10	15	14
Auditing	22	12	10
Inservicing	5	1	2
Promoting awareness	3	1	3
Teaching new courses	1	5	4
Other	2	4	4
Total per cent	100	100	100
N responses	161	152	402

Differences in the personal priorities of primary and secondary teachers were not as clearly marked as general differences in emphases for implementation (Tables 11.7 and 11.8), perhaps reflecting the range of teachers' experience with profiles even within schools. Auditing or mapping the curriculum was nominated by more secondary schools than primary schools as a priority activity. Auditing is an important intermediary step between initial familiarisation with the profiles and subsequent planning or programming. It may be that this is a more difficult task to coordinate in the secondary sector, given the size and faculty structure of these schools.

Commitment to profiles

As well as indicating the nature of the school's implementation of profiles, principals were asked to indicate whether their school's commitment to the use of profile outcome statements in 1995 and 1996 was high, medium or low. For 1996, profiles were a high priority in fifty-five schools (29 per cent), a medium priority in 73 schools (39 per cent) and a low priority in 58 schools (31 per cent). Seventeen principals did not respond to this question and one indicated that profiles were not a priority.

As might be expected, the shift in the weighting of profiles as a priority between 1995 and 1996 appears to be largely reflective of state or system demands with, in some cases, a decrease in the priority assigned to profiles where the process of implementation is on hold. More commonly, a higher priority was assigned in 1996 as schools were required to report to systems on their progress or to report to parents using profiles in one or more key learning areas. Eighty per cent of primary schools responding to this question rated their commitment in 1996 as medium to high, whereas 75 per cent of secondary schools rated their commitment as medium to low.

Teachers were also asked to rate the extent of their commitment to profiles relative to other school priorities in 1996. Twenty-nine per cent of teachers responding to this question (149) indicated a high priority, 39 per cent (197) indicated a medium priority and 32 per cent (163) indicated a low priority. Primary teachers were more likely to rate their commitment as medium to high and secondary teachers as medium to low.

Use and evaluation of implementation strategies

Teachers were asked about the strategies that had been used at their school to support them in their use of profiles. These included provision of documents, general staff meetings, meetings with key staff members, allocation of a key leadership position to support staff, collaborative planning and programming, staff being supported to attend training and development programs, pupil-free days, involving parents or parent groups and working jointly with other schools or groups of schools. Responses denoting the extent of use of each of these strategies are shown in Table 11.11.

Table 11.11 Strategies Used to Support Implementation of Profiles

	% of teachers	
Strategies	Primary	Secondary
Provision of documents	95	93
General staff meetings	85	56
Meetings with key staff members	67	64
Key leadership position to support staff	60	27
Collaborative planning and programming	74	56
Setting aside pupil free days	71	44
Provision of relief teachers	38	26
Support to attend training and development programs	74	66
Involving parents/parent groups	24	6
Working jointly with another school/group of schools	33	19
Other	4	8
N respondents	260	266

The most common strategies were by far the provision of documents, general staff meetings and participation in training and development programs. Primary schools have generally been more involved in supporting teachers beyond providing relevant documents. More primary than secondary teachers indicated that a variety of strategies had been employed at their schools to support the implementation of profiles. Two-thirds of primary teachers indicated that six or more of the above strategies had been used at their school compared with one-third of secondary teachers. Where schools were only using one strategy to support implementation, this was most commonly the provision of documents. Where teachers reported the use of two strategies, these were usually the provision of documents and either staff meetings held at the school or provision of support for teachers to attend training and development programs.

The second most common strategy indicated by secondary teachers was use of meetings with key staff, which is consistent with the faculty structure of secondary schools. The generally low involvement of parents in the implementation process is interesting in light of comments regarding the concerns teachers have as to whether the use of profiles for the purposes of assessment and reporting would be of any use to parents or whether parents would understand such reports.

When asked to indicate up to three of the most useful strategies employed at their school to support teachers in their use of profiles, half of the teachers indicated that the provision of documents had proven to be a valuable tool in assisting implementation. Other strategies deemed to be useful included collaborative planning and programming (47 per cent), the provision of training and development (42 per cent), the setting aside of pupil-free days (35 per cent) and meetings with key staff members (30 per cent).

Teachers were also asked to indicate up to three implementation strategies that they believed would be useful but which had not yet been employed at their schools. The most commonly suggested strategy was the opportunity to work jointly with another school or group of schools, referred to by 44 per cent of the teachers responding to this question. This was followed by the provision of relief teachers (35 per cent), setting aside pupil-free days (31 per cent), training and development (23 per cent), collaborative planning and programming (22 per cent) and involving parents and parent groups (17 per cent).

Use of computer technology

In some states, computers and computer programs were provided to schools to assist teachers with record keeping and aspects of reporting on their students' achievements. In Victoria, for example, a program was provided to all government schools and to all Catholic primary schools. In other states the intention is to provide such facilities but to date they have not been installed in all schools or software is still under development. In the context of the resources being made available to support schools' use of profiles, both principals and teachers were asked in the survey to comment on the computer technology in place at their school, the purposes for which it was being used, by whom, and how useful they had found it to be.

Of the 181 principals responding to this section of the questionnaire, a third indicated that there was no computer technology in place to support teachers in their use of profiles (33 primary, 27 secondary) and a further 5 per cent indicated that although none was currently in place there were plans to introduce it. Where computer technology was in place, generic word processing/spreadsheet programs were most commonly nominated. Thirty-seven principals listed KIDMAP® as the program in place at their school to support teachers in their use of profiles. Thirty-five of these schools were from Victoria (20 primary and 15 secondary schools).

Of the 470 teachers who responded to this section, 41 per cent indicated that there was no use of computer technology to support the use of profiles in their school or none that they were aware of. KIDMAP was the most commonly mentioned program, specified by 28 per cent of teachers (two-thirds primary). Sixteen percent of teachers indicated that the profiles were available on disk at their school.

Teachers were asked to indicate if they had personally used computer technology in their work with profiles and for what purpose—planning, assessing, recording, reporting or combinations of these activities. Of the 277 teachers who indicated that computer technology was in place at their school to support the use of profiles, 47 per cent used it for planning, 30 per cent for assessing, 34 per cent for recording and 27 per cent for reporting. A third stated that they did not make use of the technology available.

Teachers were asked to rate their access to computers on a three point scale, as very good, fair or unsatisfactory. They also assessed the program they were using, commenting on ease of use of the program, time taken to use it and its general usefulness. Of the 130 teachers who rated one or more of these four aspects, the majority (about 80 per cent) rated each as fair to very good. Teachers who were not using computer technology tended not to make comments in this section, which might have excluded a number of 'unsatisfactory' responses.

Additional features or improvements that teachers would like to see with respect to computer technology included programs that are more specialised and/or more relevant to profiles, are more user-friendly, streamlined, and have reporting facilities that allow for individual variation. Teachers also commented that more hardware was needed in schools (especially laptops) and hardware that is up to date and powerful. Inservicing was also suggested. The following comment typifies many responses:

> Teachers need to get better access to computers. It is unfair and unrealistic to expect profile information to be typed into computers during class preparation time. Laptops would ease the load and enable staff to organise time more efficiently.

Use of standardised and diagnostic tests

Principals and teachers were asked to name any standardised or diagnostic tests that were used at the school in addition to statewide testing programs. Of the 164 principals who responded to this question, one-third indicated that standardised and diagnostic tests were not generally used in the school (13 primary schools, 39 secondary schools). Sixty per cent of the 452 teachers who responded to this question did not use either standardised or diagnostic tests.

Of the schools where one or more tests were used, 67 were primary and 45 were secondary schools. Forty-seven secondary teachers and 141 primary teachers nominated one or more types of tests that they used with their students.

Responses were categorised into the seven main areas listed in Table 11.12. About two-thirds of the principals whose schools used standardised and diagnostic tests used tests falling into two or more areas. Most teachers (82 per cent) nominated tests which fell into only one category. The most common types of tests administered in the schools surveyed were reading comprehension tests followed by spelling and word recognition tests. Numeracy tests were also used although not quite as extensively. Testing was reported as more commonplace in primary than in secondary schools and as proportionally more common in the non-government schools surveyed. A greater percentage of secondary principals than teachers listed tests used, which may reflect the more specialised roles of teaching staff in secondary schools.

Table 11.12 Standardised and Diagnostic Tests Used in Schools

	% of teacher responses*		% of school responses*	
Types of tests	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec
Not used	39	79	16	46
Reading and comprehension	43	10	28	30
Spelling and word recognition	28	3	35	15
Mathematics	18	3	28	13
General and group ability tests	1	0	0	8
Individual ability tests	1	0	5	8
Competitions	4	5	14	6
Battery	0	1	0	6
Other	6	4	15	15
N respondents	223	229	80	84

* Total percentages do not equal 100 as some respondents used more than one type of test.

Some principals indicated that tests were used with students every 12 months, or with new enrolments and 'at risk' children. Teachers gave a variety of reasons for test use, including using the tests as an aid to the grouping of children at the beginning of the school year, assessing levels at transition, determining the general ability of a new class and finding out which individual children require help. One teacher tested students at the beginning and end of the year and used the results as an aid to monitoring their progress. One Year 3 teacher tests students each year and uses the results to determine future curriculum priorities.

Interestingly, most respondents did not specify that the use the tests was for diagnostic purposes. Only a few teachers and principals commented that test results are used to assist in the planning of individual programs for students. Other teachers commented on their non-use of tests: 'I know my kids'; 'definitely not—they're not always accurate'; 'a load of rubbish'; and 'I don't want to label my students'.

Competitions (such as those run by the University of NSW or the Westpac mathematics competition) were also used as a way of obtaining standardised information about student performance. One teacher used them 'to expose children to competition/the concept of exams'. Five non-government secondary schools indicated that they made use of a private consultant to administer a battery of tests to incoming students. Where principals and teachers did not specify the type of test used this was listed as 'other'. Also included among 'other' were foreign language tests, an anxiety scale (administered to all students in one school), adolescent coping scale and unspecified problem solving tasks.

Of the respondents who indicated that they used standardised and diagnostic tests as part of their assessment programs, 37 per cent stated that they did not report the results of tests to parents. Twenty-five per cent of respondents reported the results directly to parents and the remainder reported them indirectly, in the context of a more general report or else on the request of the parent.

Training and Development

Teachers were asked to reflect on any formal training and development they had received in relation to profiles in the past three or four years. Nineteen per cent of teachers surveyed had attended a National Professional Development Program (NPDP), 32 per cent had attended training and development programs run by subject-based teaching organisations (e.g. History Teachers Association, Science Teachers Association) and 60 per cent had experienced school based professional development (non-NPDP). Twenty-four per cent of teachers commented on some other type of professional development including network or regional meetings, programs provided by the Catholic Education Office, their own reading and external studies (e.g. DipEd or Masters).

Where further detail was given regarding school-based training and development, comment was most commonly made about pupil-free days and consultants. Primary teachers also referred to training at general staff meetings, whereas secondary teachers referred to training in faculty groups.

Teachers who had attended training and development programs were asked to indicate the type of training that they had found useful by ticking as many areas in the list shown in Table 11.13 as they thought appropriate. Most indicated more than one area. There were also a few negative comments on training received to date, including that it had been too general in some cases, not useful for experienced teachers and detracted from teaching time.

Table 11.13 Useful Foci for Training and Development

	% of teachers	
Focus	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum mapping / auditing / aligning	36	49
Assessment methods	56	40
Technology training	13	9
Assessment according to profile outcome statements	42	23
Program planning	69	55
Reporting to parents	21	9
Classroom practice	52	31
N respondents	211	212

Some teachers expressed a reluctance to undergo any further training, especially in their own time. One teacher commented that what was learned was not used in practice once that teacher had returned to their 'vacuum'. Others, however, indicated that they would like further training in a variety of areas, as listed in Table 11.14. Again most teachers indicated more than one area. It is worthy of note that more teachers expressed training and development needs than commented on the usefulness of programs undertaken.

Table 11.14 Training and Development Needs

	% of teachers	
Focus	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum mapping / auditing / aligning	36	40
Assessment methods	45	55
Technology training	47	51
Assessment according to profile outcome statements	56	56
Program planning	56	48
Reporting to parents	37	56
Classroom practice	49	51
N respondents	245	252

Teachers indicated that further training and development programs were needed across all aspects associated with the use of profiles. Training and development in the use of computer technology was indicated as desired by half of the respondents. Only about 10 per cent had previously received any such training. Similarly, a high percentage of respondents wanted training on reporting to parents, especially secondary teachers who had received little inservicing in this area at the time of the survey.

In addition to this list other suggestions of areas for training offered by teachers included integrated units and cross-curricular perspectives, models for implementation, time management strategies and an emphasis on 'efficient' assessment practices, record keeping, moderating sessions and key competencies. One teacher also commented that there was a need to have ongoing access to experts after the training had taken place.

Use and evaluation of resource documents

Teachers were asked to refer to the purple background information sheet for an explanation of the state variations of the *Curriculum profiles for Australian schools* pertaining to the key learning areas relevant to their teaching. They were then asked to indicate the resource documents they were familiar with in each key learning area and, on a four-point scale, how useful they had found each. Included in this list was the Mayer Committee's proposed key competencies for Australian schools.[4] Their responses are summarised in the following table.

Table 11.15 Usefulness of Profile Documents in Key Learning Areas

	Percentage of teachers								
Usefulness	Arts	Eng	HPE	LOTE	Math	Sci	SOSE	Tech	Mayer
Very useful	17	40	26	10	40	32	32	26	12
Moderately useful	35	41	33	17	38	37	32	32	30
Not very useful	8	5	6	8	7	5	5	6	10
Not at all useful	1	1	1	5	2	2	3	2	5
Not seen	39	13	34	60	13	24	28	34	43
Total per cent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N giving rating	150	266	158	82	277	208	204	172	153
N respondents	246	306	240	205	319	274	284	261	268

As would be expected, primary teachers were generally more familiar with documents from a greater range of key learning areas than secondary teachers. The total number of teachers having seen and rated a document in each area ranged from 82 in LOTE to 277 in mathematics. Unfortunately it is not possible to tell whether the rather large numbers not responding to this section had not seen the documents or had not found them useful. If a teacher did supply a rating however, it was usually positive. The documents rated as very or moderately useful by teachers, in descending order of percentages of those who had seen them, were those in English (93%), science (90%), mathematics (89%), HPE (89%), SOSE (88%), technology (88%), the arts (85%) and LOTE (68%). For the Mayer Committee's proposed key competencies, 82 per cent of the 153 teachers who responded rated them as moderately to very useful. There was a tendency for more primary teachers to rate the documents as very useful and secondary teachers to rate them as moderately useful.

Teachers were also asked to list any further resources relevant to profiles that they had used and to indicate on the same four-point scale how useful they had found these. Few teachers made comment on these, which is surprising considering the number of documents becoming available to teachers. Timing, accessibility and time to read and digest the documents were noted as problematic in general comments.

> Where are the support materials! Second semester this year is too late.

Course advice documents from various systems, work samples and 'How to use' the profiles/SPS/CSF resources were among those mentioned, as were a handful of texts focusing on outcomes and described as 'student friendly'. One teacher commented that the most useful resources are those obtained from other working teachers.

Need for further resources or resource materials

Teachers were asked to indicate the types of resources that they believe are needed within their school contexts and comment on other types of resources not listed in the questionnaire that they felt were needed. Responses are shown in Table 11.16.

Table 11.16 Resource Needs

	Percentage of teachers	
Resources	Primary	Secondary
Samples of units	80	78
Work samples	43	57
Parent information	60	44
Assessment tools examples	82	83
Report proformas examples	72	76
Learning activities	62	52
N respondents	254	258

Teachers also made a range of comments on other types of resources needed and the way in which they should be delivered. Some teachers wanted more copies of the profile documents made available. Others called for more sample courses which include assessment and reporting ideas, integrated units, texts and record management strategies. Improving access to resources was stated as a priority, which would involve a more timely delivery of resources and cheaper resources (or else better funding for schools).

> I am yet to be convinced that the practicalities of implementing the profiles have been thought through fully. Certainly it has not been resourced adequately. It is another example of a centralised decision to be implemented at a local level but without centralised support.

Resources should be above all practical, grass roots generated, simplified, teacher friendly. Time was mentioned as the most valuable of resources. One teacher suggested 'an incinerator'.

Changes in teaching practices

Teachers were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the eight statements regarding their teaching, assessment and reporting practices listed in Table 11.17. As might be expected, the influence of profiles on assessment and reporting procedures was more predominant among primary teachers. Teachers who were using profiles for assessment and reporting purposes were more likely to indicate that change had taken place. Teachers who rated profiles as a high personal priority were also more likely to disagree or disagree strongly with the first three statements.

Table 11.17 Effect of Profiles on Current Teaching, Assessment and Reporting Practices

Statement	Percentage of respondents[*]							
	strongly disagree		disagree		agree		strongly agree	
	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec
Profiles have had little influence on how I assess my students' learning	15	13	50	36	26	33	9	18
Profiles have had little influence on how I report students' progress to parents	13	9	46	28	33	43	8	20
I have not needed to change my assessment & reporting practices	10	14	55	46	31	34	4	6
Profiles have meant I now know more about the school's program overall	7	16	41	43	44	35	8	6
Profiles have given me a clearer sense of direction in what I am teaching	7	14	30	35	51	45	12	6
Profiles have meant I am more confident in making judgements about the learning outcomes of my students	6	13	36	46	47	36	11	5
Profiles have made me more involved with other teachers at the school	10	16	41	46	40	33	9	5
Profiles have made me more enthusiastic about my work as a teacher	25	25	45	49	26	24	4	2

[*] The number of respondents for each comment ranged from 488 to 520.

The fourth, fifth and seventh statements, which relate to other aspects of teaching practice, were agreed with by more primary teachers than secondary and by teachers who had a medium to high commitment to the use of profiles. Teachers who were using profiles for assessment and reporting were also more likely to indicate agreement. The last statement regarding general enthusiasm for teaching was disagreed with by equal numbers of primary and secondary teachers, but there was a greater tendency for teachers with a low personal commitment to the use of profiles to strongly disagree with this statement.

There were no pronounced trends regarding amount of teaching experience and agreement or disagreement with the statements, although less experienced teachers were generally more likely to report a greater confidence in making judgements about learning outcomes, involvement with other teachers and having a greater sense of direction in what they were teaching as a result of their use of profiles. Less experienced teachers were also more likely than more experienced teachers to have given a higher personal priority to the use of profiles.

Usefulness of profiles

Teachers were asked to rate the usefulness of profiles for assessment and reporting purposes, with regard to the different audiences for which reports might be intended. Ratings of usefulness were given on a four point scale and responses are summarised in Table 11.18.

Table 11.18 Overall Usefulness of Profiles

How useful?	Self	Other teachers	Students	Parents	Employers
Highly	15	12	10	10	7
Quite	54	55	42	38	35
Marginal	24	27	33	36	34
Not at all	7	6	15	16	24
N respondents	497	528	503	511	481

Although there is much that concerns teachers about the implementation of profiles, over two thirds of respondents regarded them as highly useful or useful for themselves and their teaching colleagues. Primary teachers tended to be a little more positive than secondary teachers. Slightly more secondary teachers than primary teachers viewed them as useful for students. Few respondents found them to be of no use at all for students. Respondents were more evenly divided in their opinions as to the usefulness of profiles for reporting to parents and more negative regarding their usefulness to employers.

> In 1993, we had a Gr 12 student with severe dyslexia. Although he received a 'D' on his senior certificate, his teacher and I compiled a special report for English based on SPS. His reading, viewing, listening were all of a very high standard based on profile descriptors. Only his writing was at level 3. As a consequence, based on our report he

> received an automotive electrical apprenticeship and is doing very well. The profile we were able to compile reflected so much more about this student than his senior certificate ever could. We used only the assessment and resources already in place and it was NOT time consuming.

Teachers whose involvement with profiles went beyond familiarisation and teachers who were more highly committed to the use of profiles were significantly more likely to rate them as being useful for reporting purposes.

When asked to suggest ways in which the usefulness of profiles could be further improved for the above groups a large percentage of responses referred to the need for a more user-friendly language (43 per cent), followed by the need for more community education (16 per cent).

> Parents have also requested that the language used in the profiles be made more understandable for people who don't deal with these areas every day.

Several respondents referred to the need for less vagueness in the language of outcomes, a greater consistency in their use (between teachers/schools/systems) and a more streamlined way of using profiles to assess and report on student progress. The suggestion was made that work samples can help in this respect. Some suggested that there needs to be support for more teacher time to be devoted to using the profiles, while others referred to the need for more involvement of parents and employers in the implementation process.

Benefits

In response to the question, 'What do you think have been the most beneficial features associated with the use of profiles in your school?', teachers were asked to tick as many of the five benefits listed in Table 11.19 as they thought applicable. There was also space provided on the questionnaire for further comment.

The review process, which involves an evaluation of the what, why and how of teaching, was seen to be beneficial by a majority of respondents. Other possible advantages, such as the opportunity to work with other schools, may have been rated lower as a result of not having been used as implementation strategies. Many teachers did indicate that they would like to have the opportunity to work more with other schools. The difference between primary and secondary teachers in identifying a common framework for reporting as beneficial reflects their different levels of involvement in using profiles for reporting. Teachers who were using profiles for reporting were more likely to indicate the common reporting framework as a benefit.

Table 11.19 Benefits of Profiles for Schools

Benefits	Percentage of teachers Primary	 Secondary
Curriculum review	64	71
Teaching/learning focus	65	61
Assessment/reporting review	56	45
Working with other teachers/schools	35	33
Common framework for reporting	54	28
N respondents	235	231
N further comments	8	15

Some teachers offered comments on other perceived benefits which included the continuity of assessment and reporting across year levels for individual students and the value in the feedback obtained about student learning generated by the use of profiles. Other teachers saw value in the curriculum review where this had led to developing breadth in the curriculum. The effect on individual teaching strategies was seen as beneficial in that profiles had provided an impetus to reassess the what, why and how of teaching.

> Profiles are a helpful guide to teachers; offer a broad view of learning throughout the whole school; sequence and room for development, eg spiralling of skills, values, attitudes; focus on child's learning i.e. what the child can do; help us develop a common language.

*****

> The use of profiles has forced teachers to be more critical of why and how they are assessing their students. From a personal point of view it has forced me to identify the reasons why I give assessment tasks, what I am to get out of the task and how does it help the student understand the structure of a subject.

*****

> They clearly assist in focusing on the individual needs within a group and provide useful information on developing and improving teaching practice. However the time and labour required in maintaining meaningful records/profiles is over-burdensome especially where a secondary teacher may be assumed to be teaching 150+ students at any given time.

*****

> Standardised reporting is extremely helpful in view of our mobile population. Children transferring interstate should be able to be slotted straight in to the appropriate level of a school system in another state.

Of the 87 teachers who did not identify any benefits, most (25 primary and 41 secondary teachers) went on to identify problems associated with the use of profiles. Twelve teachers explicitly stated that there were no beneficial features at all. Most of these had indicated that profiles were a low personal priority. Further to this, one respondent stated that the reporting system at their school was 'already fine' and another stated that the problems with profiles outweighed any benefits.

Advantages cited by respondents reflected the foci of the various systems to some extent. Curriculum review was more commonly noted by Victorian and South Australian teachers as an advantage. Queensland teachers identified with the assessment/reporting review and the common framework for reporting. The remaining advantages were fairly evenly spread across states, although NSW teachers were more likely to indicate a teaching/learning focus as an advantage and Tasmanian teachers were more likely to select working with other teachers or schools.

Teachers whose involvement in the implementation of profiles had moved beyond the familiarisation stage, as well as those who had indicated that profiles were a high or medium to high personal priority, were more likely to identify each of the advantages as a benefit associated with the use of profiles in their school.

Problems

Teachers indicated the concerns they had with the use of profiles at their school in a similar fashion to the benefits, with five choices as listed in Table 11.20 in addition to space provided for further comment.

Table 11.20 Concerns Regarding the Use of Profiles in Schools

	Percentage of teachers	
Problems	Primary	Secondary
Amount of time required	91	87
Parental understanding	69	64
Lack of resources/training	62	68
Timeline for implementation	59	59
Negativity of some staff	47	46
N respondents	260	272
N other comments	39	30

Not surprisingly, the issue of the time involved in using profiles is a major concern for almost 90 per cent of teachers responding to this question. Primary teachers commonly expressed concern at the number of outcomes to be covered across eight key learning areas whereas secondary teachers commented on the number of students that they deal with each day and the task of recording outcomes for each student.

It was difficult to identify any state trends, as teacher concerns appeared to be fairly similar across systems. Concern with parental understanding of profiles rated quite highly at the time of the survey in South Australia. The timeline for implementation appeared to be more of a concern in Tasmania and the Northern Territory and less of a concern in Western Australia. Tasmanian teachers who responded did not indicate as great a concern with availability of resources as teachers from other states.

Generally there was no real difference in the identification of concerns by teachers who had indicated that profiles were a low or high personal priority. This differs from the identification of benefits where teachers who were more committed to and involved with the use of profiles more readily identified benefits experienced in their school. Teachers who rated profiles as a high priority were a little less likely to indicate that staff negativity was a concern. Teachers who were involved with familiarising themselves with the mathematics and English profiles were just as likely, or more likely, to identify each of the concerns as teachers who were using them for programming, assessment and reporting. This was especially the case for lack of resources and training. However teachers involved in reporting with the mathematics profile were more likely to indicate a concern with parental understanding than teachers who were not yet involved in the reporting process.

> The profiles in English are unlimited in their demands and unrealistic in their expectations of teachers. They are oblivious to the fact that teachers cannot possibly do all that they require with the class sizes they have and the number of classes they teach.

•••••

> I believe that the single greatest requirement for effective implementation of the profiles is time being made available to staff so they can skill themselves competently to adapt to and positively embrace this new system.

•••••

> The rate in which they have been introduced has been too rapid. It has been information overload in some cases. The resource material to implement the outcomes is just starting to come out but we have already been expected to implement them.

•••••

> Although I use profiles and find them interesting and challenging I feel strongly that I have been bulldozed into something at a rate I cannot cope with.

•••••

> Not enough was done to explain or justify why these changes were needed.

•••••

> Profiles should not be used as political footballs to be implemented to gain political advantage and then revoked as governments change. They should be apolitical tools used to the advantage of Australia's children.

•••••

> Instead of the complicated language couldn't there be 'user friendly language' for classroom teachers? By the time we translate the jargon we have wasted valuable time.

•••••

> It is not just the profiles - it is the attitude of having these things constantly imposed upon us despite protests that we are already overloaded.

•••••

> It is not just the profiles but all the implications of the profiles-rewrites, new forms of assessment, new jargon, more information, time to train students in being 'assessment smart'.

•••••

> When will the academics in the hierarchy come to terms with the fact that illiteracy, discipline, and low staffing levels are the priority problems in our schools?

•••••

> Teachers need to believe that these changes and the related time and work to implement them won't again be thrown out the door for yet again a NEWER scheme!!

•••••

> So much time is wasted on 'rehashing', rewording and learning the new 'language'.

•••••

> It is a great idea but it needs to be more user friendly, less time-consuming and have more of an Aboriginal/ESL focus.

•••••

> SPS ... whilst isolating those students who are not achieving, currently there has been no extra help provided to bring them up to scratch!

•••••

> I am concerned about how isolated teachers with little experience are going to implement and learn about profiling.

Other comments offered by teachers about their general concerns with the implementation of profiles at their school included reference to teaching conditions which are not conducive to implementation (for example, class sizes). The language of the profiles was criticised both for its perceived vagueness and also for its complexity. A few teachers from Queensland were concerned that profiles were not in line with existing curricula. Other concerns were expressed regarding inconsistency (between key learning areas, teachers, schools and states), the criticism that the curriculum was becoming assessment driven and further comment on the lack of resources (or poor timing of their availability) to support the use of profiles.

Five teachers explicitly stated that they had no concerns with the use of profiles at their school.

Improvements

Teachers were also asked to suggest ways in which teaching and learning at their schools could be better organised to facilitate the implementation of profiles.

Approximately equal numbers of primary and secondary teachers responded. Altogether 187 teachers made one suggestion, 99 teachers made two suggestions and 18 made three. The provision of more time (31 per cent of all suggestions) was the main way that teachers saw the implementation of profiles being enhanced. This was followed by the suggestion of more inservicing for teachers (20 per cent); the establishment or encouragement of more teacher networks, as well as the provision of time to access these (13 per cent); curriculum review (6 per cent); the provision of more resources and resources being made available when they are needed (6 per cent); improved teaching conditions (e.g. smaller classes) (6 per cent) or system decisions such as a decision on the use of profiles or an extension to the required timeline (5 per cent); and, although not really indicated by the question, suggestions for changes to the profiles themselves (3 per cent).

> The number of facets of the profile be small to make the teacher's task of assessing manageable. A generic set of assessable characteristics be established for all KLAs. This will help the student profile be understood widely and allow the teacher (particularly primary teacher) time to carry out other teaching duties.

•••••

> There has been a lack of consultation with those who work 'at the rock face'.

•••••

> Much more inservicing of what 'Profiles' actually mean, where to find them. Profiles seem to need to be a whole-school commitment. The reporting styles and assessment styles need to change, along with teacher and parent attitudes

•••••

> The keys to success are: (i) don't try to do too much too soon, and (ii) make sure the staff understand the changes being implemented and are involved in planning for change-collaborative change unites, imposed change divides.

•••••

> One or two words can say it all ...
>
> - TIME needed to implement and digest information
> - HUMAN & MONETARY RESOURCES given to schools to assist effective implementation. None of these have really come with the massive amount of paper warfare teachers are asked to digest and then take on board!
> - Listen to teachers—the people who have the power for this to succeed or fail—recognise that not all feedback and experiences are going to be positive and work with them to overcome problems. DON'T PUSH.

Other comments included more resource teachers (primary), better computer software, team-teaching, time spent convincing teachers of the benefits, focus on teacher morale, uniformity in assessment, better leadership focusing on 'neglected areas' and more feedback for staff.

Key competencies

The final section of the survey asked teachers to indicate whether their current teaching program, and assessment and reporting, explicitly incorporated each of the Mayer Committee's proposed key competencies.[5] The responses are shown as percentages of the total number of teachers in the sample in Tables 11.21 and 11.22 (the percentages, which add separately to 100 for primary and secondary teachers for each competency, should be read across the rows).

Table 11.21 Key Competencies Covered in Current Teaching Programs

	Covered in program		Could be covered		No response	
	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec
Competency	%	%	%	%	%	%
Collecting/analysing/organising information	45	65	7	5	48	30
Communicating ideas and information	44	63	5	6	51	31
Planning and organising activities	33	57	13	12	54	31
Working and organising activities	44	54	8	13	48	31
Using mathematical ideas and techniques	40	41	6	7	54	52
Solving problems	42	48	8	7	51	45
Using technology	35	43	12	14	51	43
Using an understanding of cultures	36	36	14	17	47	47

Table 11.22 Key Competencies Currently Assessed and Reported On

	Assessed / reported		Under consideration		No response	
	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec
Competency	%	%	%	%	%	%
Collecting/analysing/organising information	24	28	4	3	72	69
Communicating ideas and information	25	28	3	2	72	70
Planning and organising activities	13	18	3	4	84	78
Working and organising activities	22	19	3	3	75	78
Using mathematical ideas and techniques	22	17	5	2	75	81
Solving problems	22	21	5	2	76	77
Using technology	15	13	7	3	82	84
Using an understanding of cultures	13	8	6	4	83	78

The most notable features of these tables are the comparatively small percentages who have these issues 'under consideration' or believe that they could cover the key competencies in their teaching programs; the larger percentages who consider that competencies are covered in their program in comparison with the percentages who currently assess and report on them; and the large percentages who gave no response, particularly in relation to assessment and reporting. This section of the questionnaire was on the back page, and was probably overlooked by some respondents.

Other comments on this section of the questionnaire included that the competencies were not explicitly assessed but were taken into account when reporting, and that competencies were explicitly reported on where these were included in the relevant state outcomes. Two teachers commented that they had never heard of the key competencies.

Teachers were also asked to provide examples of relevant activities from their teaching programs for each of the key competencies where appropriate. This was the final section of the questionnaire and its location on the back page may account for the lack of detail provided by many of the responding teachers. Examples for one or more of the key competencies were given by 231 teachers. Detailed examples of all competencies were received from 54 primary and 108 secondary teachers, 153 teachers ticked the relevant boxes without providing examples and 169 teachers made no response.

Both primary and secondary teachers gave examples of a range of assessment activities from their current teaching programs where outcomes parallel each of the key competencies. Although some of the competencies were more easily identified with particular key learning areas, all eight areas were mentioned by primary and secondary teachers as being relevant. A summary of their comments follows.

Collecting, analysing and organising information

Students from all levels and in all key learning areas are commonly required to complete research assignments which involve collecting, analysing and evaluating information. Students also write essays, write or present reports, assemble writing folios, analyse texts, collect newspaper and magazine articles which they collate and sometimes annotate, report on statistical data, undertake field work, interpret statistics, read graphs (an activity common to a number of KLAs), carry out experiments and gather data for design projects.

Communicating ideas and information

A student-centred teaching style encourages the demonstration of 'communicating ideas and information' across KLAs and at both primary and secondary levels. Students regularly experience 'group work' where communication between group members is observed and assessed by the teacher or students. Teachers also listed oral and written presentations, class debates, journal writing, class discussions and meetings, recounts, a primary school 'news circle', the collection and presentation of a personal heritage file and oral history projects, painting and peer tutorials. Students also demonstrate this competency through their interpretation and use of mathematical symbols, graphical representation, scale drawing and map reading.

Planning and organising activities

Students demonstrate their planning and organisational skills when they plan debates or role plays, draw up worksheets and questionnaires for topic area research, carry out independent study, make up their designs and negotiate their learning. They are increasingly required to set explicit goals for themselves and to evaluate their progress towards them. One teacher commented that students demonstrate this competency whenever they produce 'finished work'.

Not only was this activity fundamental to teaching style across learning areas but was often commented on as being fundamental to whole class or whole school activities such as a class 'Parliament' where students passed their own Bills, the organisation of a school fête or fair.

Working with others and in teams

Examples given of ways in which students demonstrate that they are able to work with others included many of the above activities which are commonly conducted in pairs, small groups or as a class. Practical work and laboratory work were commonly listed by science teachers. Also listed were activities such as outdoor play, pastoral care camps and a 'company day'. One teacher commented that group work was common but not explicitly written into teaching programs. Another noted that this competency was a school priority. In contrast, another teacher commented that this was not encouraged in class as it was almost like 'cheating'.

Using mathematical ideas and techniques

As would be expected, teachers gave a range of examples of activities from mathematics and science teaching programs where the use of mathematical ideas and techniques is most explicitly demonstrated. Some English teachers suggested that this competency was not covered and not applicable. However other English teachers, as well as teachers from other key learning areas, listed activities such as measurement for design, the use of calculators, interpreting and incorporating statistics and graphs in essays and reports, mapping weather predictions, examining price indexes, accounting, cash flow, applying to daily problems, art/craft activities and cooking.

Solving problems

Teachers described problem-solving activities as fundamental to a student-centred approach to teaching and learning. Mathematics and scientific investigation incorporated problem solving in most or all topics. Teachers suggested activities associated with technology and art as providing very concrete examples of problem solving, especially in the development and construction of designs. Specific examples included students suggesting solutions to environmental and social problems and creating spreadsheets.

Using technology

Teachers reported many different types of technology that students use across learning areas that might be assessed and reported on. Some examples included computers and various software ranging from word processing packages, accounting programs, desktop publishing, databases, LOGO, CD-ROMs and of course the internet, laptops, video cameras, cassette players, fax machines, graphic calculators, scientific equipment and machinery.

Using an understanding of cultures

Demonstrating an understanding of cultures was thought by the respondents to this survey to be a fundamental part of LOTE, commonly incorporated into thematic units in English and SOSE, and integral to the study of subjects such as 'Aboriginal studies', 'Australian history', 'Asian studies', 'past societies' and 'legal studies'. Examples given relating to use of literature and artwork from other cultures were Aboriginal paintings and Dreamtime stories, and fairy tales. Themes such as children and families from other cultures, living in God's world, special holidays and celebrations, nutrition and food from other cultures, were mentioned. One mathematics teacher suggested that the main focus of mathematics is the place of maths in current Australian society but noted that maths from an historical perspective might add a cultural dimension (Greek geometry) and another listed playing 'Asian number games'.

In conclusion

Apart from the sectors which were excluded from the designed sample (government schools in NSW and the ACT), the schools responding to the survey were reasonably well spread throughout Australia. They were also well divided by level (primary and secondary) and by sector (government, Catholic and independent). It was recognised that the general industrial situation in several areas, coupled with the number of studies of profiles implementation currently in progress, would be likely to make a high response rate difficult to obtain. For this reason oversampling of schools by one third was done, and, although the response rate was not high in terms of the total number of schools approached, the desired minimum numbers of schools (200) and teachers (400) were exceeded. After excluding responses from 11 schools and a few teachers from other schools whose questionnaires were sparsely completed, data from 208 schools and 553 teachers were processed.

The responding schools and teachers were well enough spread in location and level that their experiences and views can be assumed to provide a reasonably representative picture of the 'state of play' regarding use of the national profiles, or their derivatives, for assessment and reporting up to and including 1996. The principals' responses showed a substantial shift in primary schools away from familiarising and programming in 1995 to assessment and reporting in 1996. They also showed a clear progression in secondary schools, from equal emphases on familiarising and programming in 1995 to a much stronger emphasis on programming and some emphasis on assessing and reporting in 1996. Teacher emphases also reflected this pattern, but were more differentiated among the various learning areas. In terms of their commitment to the implementation of profiles, primary schools, with 80 per cent rating this as moderate to high, were more positive than secondary schools, with 75 per cent rating their commitment as moderate to low.

The responses also provided many useful comments about how useful (or otherwise) teachers were finding the profiles as a basis for their assessment and reporting, and about the benefits and disadvantages that teachers perceived to be associated with use of the profiles in their schools. Teachers were also asked to indicate the extent to which their teaching, assessment and reporting practices had changed as a result of the implementation of statements and profiles. Their responses tended to be associated with the extent of their commitment to the profiles—those who rated profiles as a high personal priority were more likely to agree that their practices had changed. In line with the phased nature of implementation of profiles in most states, primary teachers were more likely than secondary teachers to agree that the profiles had influenced their assessment and reporting practices.

An intention of the survey was that it would help to identify schools where the implementation of statements and profiles, especially the latter, are proceeding well, so that a cross-section of exemplary schools could be selected for further study in site visits. How that selection was done and the findings that emerged from the visits are described in the next section of the book.

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[1] Mayer Committee, *Putting General Education to Work: The Key Competencies Report*, Australian Education Council and Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training, Melbourne, 1992.

[2] K. J. Eltis, *Focusing on Learning: Report of the Review of Outcomes and Profiles in New South Wales Schooling*, NSW Department of Education and Training, Sydney, 1995. (The background to and some findings from this review are presented by Eltis and Mowbray in Chapter 5 of this book).

[3] Mercator Software Pty Ltd, KIDMAP 96.1, Author, Perth, Western Australia, 1996.

[4] Mayer Committee, 1992.

[5] Mayer Committee, 1992.

Section 4:

The School Visits

12 Case Study Methodology

Following on from the national survey, which was useful for collecting a wide range of factual information and some views indicative of implementation aspects to probe further, the third stage of the project involved interviewing teachers, and sometimes principals, during site visits to schools.

The primary aim of this part of the project was to identify and describe exemplary practices in the classroom use of profiles for assessment and reporting. Responses to the survey suggested that teachers across Australia were at very different stages of the implementation process and have developed a range of understandings of the statements and profiles. This was to be expected given the variations in the ways that systems were introducing statements and profiles and their state variations. The school visits therefore provided a unique opportunity to explore issues arising from teachers' experiences of the implementation process in greater detail.

Selection of schools

Survey responses from all schools were considered on the basis of the following criteria:

- teachers at the school were using statements and profiles, or their state's variation, for curriculum planning;
- teachers were using or in the process of considering the use of statements and profiles for assessment and reporting purposes;
- principals and teachers generally indicated that statements and profiles were a medium to high priority relative to other school priorities;
- teachers indicated that the statements and profiles, or their state's variation, had had a substantial impact on pedagogy and other practices at the school.

From the survey questionnaires, Part II of both the Principal and Teacher Questionnaires and Part VII of the Teacher Questionnaire seemed to encapsulate these criteria best. (The actual questionnaires are included as Appendix 3.) The questions in these sections provided an immediate indication of the priority that profiles had in the school and for individual teachers, as well as the nature and extent of their use. The questionnaire responses were read individually and a sample of schools was selected for possible site visits.

As described in the previous chapter, government schools from NSW were not included in the survey sample due to the decision made by the NSW Department of School Education not to participate in the project. Government schools from the

ACT were eventually excluded also, due to their teachers' prolonged industrial action. To select schools for the case study visits, a grid was drawn up to encourage, as much as possible, the representativeness of the final sample, with states and territories on one axis and school sector and level of schooling on the other (see Table 12.1). Other factors considered in ensuring that a range of schools was represented in the case study sample included location (urban or rural) and school size.

Table 12.1 Distribution of Primary and Secondary Schools Visited, by State or Territory and Sector

	Primary schools			Secondary schools			
	Govt	Cath	Indep.	Govt	Cath	Indep.	Total
NSW		1			1		2
Victoria	1	2	1	2			6
QLD[a]							
SA	3			1			4
WA	2			2			4
Tasmania	1	1		1	1		4
NT	1			5			6
Total	8	4	1	11	2	0	26

[a] The ACER team did not request access to Queensland schools for site visits, as a related project from the University of Southern Queensland was in process in Queensland schools at the time.

In addition to the designed sample of survey schools, nominations of schools which had already made substantial progress in the use of profiles for assessment and reporting were sought from each state or territory Education Department, Catholic Education Office and Independent Schools Association to ensure the inclusion of a number of schools which might be suitable as case study schools. Two of the nominated schools were selected as case study schools along with some trial schools from WA and the NT. The remaining case study schools were from the designed sample.

Altogether, thirteen primary schools and thirteen secondary schools were visited in NSW, Victoria, SA, WA, Tasmania and the NT. Schools from both urban and rural areas in each state were included. By agreement, no visits were undertaken in Queensland, which was being covered by the project emanating from the University of Southern Queensland, and it was not possible to arrange visits to schools in the ACT because of the industrial situation.

Development of interview framework

The broad areas of focus for the interviews were teachers' understanding and use of profiles or their state's variation for the purposes of:

- their planning and classroom teaching;
- their assessment practices; and
- their reporting practices and the reception of these reports.

The general framework for the interview schedule, shown in Figure 12.1 on the next page, was developed using Part VII of the Teacher Questionnaire to provide the central focus topics. The other sources of input to the framework for the interview structure were the principal's and teachers' responses to other parts of the questionnaire. The researchers' questions in each school were prompted by particular issues requiring investigation, some suited to the individual school or system rather than to schools in general. This resulted in variations to the schedule for individual schools.

It should be noted that, although the generic term 'profile' is used in the framework presented in Figure 12.1, referring to the national profiles, the interview schedules sent to individual schools used the title of the relevant state variation of the national profiles where this was appropriate.

School visits

Principals of the case study schools were contacted by phone and asked if they and the staff members who responded to the survey would like to participate in an interview session. Following their agreement and a time being arranged for the visit, a more detailed letter and a copy of the interview schedule was sent to the school outlining issues for discussion. Interviews took place between June and September, 1996.

Three pilot interviews were conducted to check the appropriateness of the initial interview schedule and also to ensure consistency in the approach taken by the two researchers conducting the interviews.

Teacher interviews generally took place during school time (either during a lunch hour, after school or in some cases during school hours). Staff who had responded to the survey as well as other interested parties, for example curriculum coordinators and key teachers responsible for implementation, were invited to take part in the sessions. Principals chose whether they would like to be present during the group session or interviewed separately.

The interview sessions generally lasted about one hour. Time spent in the school could extend to a full day depending on whether teachers were interviewed separately or as a group. Relevant documentation, such as report proformas and assessment sheets, was collected during this time.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Assessment & Use of Profiles Research Project

What process of implementation was undertaken in the school?

(Was it sufficient for staff to understand what was required for implementation?)

VII YOUR ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING PRACTICES

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your current teaching, assessment and reporting practices?

Profiles have had little influence on how I assess my students' learning.
(How do you use them?)

Profiles have had little influence on how I report my students' progress to parents.

I did not need to change my assessment and reporting practices - they were already largely in line with the profiles.
(How do you assess them? What records do you keep?)

Using profiles has meant I now know more about the school's program overall.
(How is that a result of the profiles?)

Profiles have given me a clearer sense of direction in what I am teaching.
(Is this as a result of explicitness derived from the profile pointers ..?)
(Or something else? ... What?)

Profiles have meant I am more confident in making judgements about the learning outcomes of my students.
(More confident in articulating them ... or ... in actually identifying them?)

Profiles have made me more involved with other teachers at the school.
(How has this happened?)

Profiles have made me more enthusiastic about my work as a teacher.

Are there any aspects of the profiles approach that you feel fall short of the desired goals? (Does it suit all students? Suits all skills/outcomes? Suits all curricula?)

What technology do you use that's associated with profiles? Help or hindrance?

Was it worth the effort? (All things being equal, would you retain the approach?)

What has been the impact on student learning? ... on HOW they learn?

As a result of the outcomes-based approaches, are students:

offered different kinds of opportunities to learn?
able to learn differently (i.e. variously and also differently from their peers)?
learning different things (from what they used to learn)?

Figure 12.1 Interview Schedule Used in Case Study Visits

Reporting the case studies

Interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed. Researchers then highlighted key phrases in the transcriptions to illustrate the eventual story of the process of curriculum and assessment reform that emerged in the course of the interviews.

As well as describing the process of implementing profiles at their schools, teachers were encouraged to explore the underlying factors in their schools which had enabled successful implementation as well as those which they believed had hindered progress. The importance of the underlying pedagogic principles of the profiles was also discussed. The teachers' views were offered in a context which recognised the importance of sharing both positive and negative experiences, which in turn can be used as a model for others. The system chapters, the survey and our school visits have shown that implementation, where it is occurring, has not always been successful to date. If this large educational reform is to succeed on more than a superficial level, systems and schools need to be aware of this fact and take action.

The issues that emerged from the interviews suggested the framework used in the next few chapters to illustrate the story under the following headings:

- The impact of implementation—underlying pedagogic principles;
- Essential factors for successful implementation;
- Other significant factors;
- Strategies for teachers implementing outcomes-based approaches in their schools and classrooms (the best teachers are natural jugglers with experience);
- The perceived benefits associated with good implementation;
- Ways in which implementation and/or trialing can go wrong;
- How to remedy (and in many cases, salvage) the situation?

The main findings from the interviews are reported in the following chapters. Extracts from the transcripts are included to illustrate the findings and bring to life the views of teachers as they explored the process of reform in their particular schools during the interviews. In selecting the extracts, the researchers attempted to be inclusive of the range of participants in order to reflect the diversity of experiences and views, as well as issues that are common across systems and schools.

Although the findings are reported with reference to the national profiles (and statements) it should be noted that this encompassed the state variations of the national profiles and/or statements current in 1996, as listed on the next page:

ACT	ACT Curriculum Frameworks and National Profiles
NT	Common Curriculum Statement; Common Assessment Statement
Queensland	Student Performance Standards (SPS) - English and Mathematics
SA	Curriculum Statements and Profiles for Australian Schools
Tasmania	National Statements and Curriculum Profiles
Victoria	Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF)
WA	Student Outcome Statements (SOS)
NSW	*on hold* - discussion at NSW schools focused on general issues regarding outcomes-based education

The researchers believe that they have faithfully represented the teachers' views and acknowledge their appreciation of the teacher time involved (precious commodity as that is) as well as the teachers' candid, honest and often enlightening responses, reflecting, as hoped, a consideration of their experiences. We believe that teachers will probably be able to recognise their system's trialing and implementation efforts as described by them in this part of the report. System leaders should also be able to recognise their actions and strategies, despite general anonymity,[1] and may be encouraged to analyse the ways in which a more effective implementation can be undertaken in their system in the future.

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[1] Occasional extracts contain references to features that point to the state or territory from which they originated.

13 General and Underlying Principles

This chapter focuses on some of the more general issues relating to the impact on schools of implementing a statements- and profiles-based approach. Awareness of these general issues is important to an assessment of whether implementation in a school can be considered 'successful', as well as providing a useful background for consideration of the wide range of more specific factors discussed in some detail in the next chapter.

In each interview, the opening question invited teachers to begin their story with a description of their first encounter with the statements and profiles. This enabled a contextualising for both teachers and researchers in the discussion, as to the length of time and depth of the familiarity teachers had with an outcomes-focused approach. The researchers were able to establish the meanings teachers attached to the terminology. A surprisingly large number of the teachers recounted that their initial contact had been with the national statement and profiles documents, commonly introduced to the school community in the form of unaccompanied documentation. They reported that these initiatives had frequently prompted a review of curriculum and pedagogical practice in their school.

B: It actually commenced in 1992 when they first produced a national profile and Victorian profile and we had a Victorian English language profile, and we were reviewing our assessment and reporting practices at the time. We were looking at how to assess students using observation, group work, testing, informal testing, how to treat records and all of those sorts of things, and out of that it came up that we decided to introduce the Victorian English language profile—and we were one of the first schools in the area to do it, weren't we H?

B: At that time I was the curriculum coordinator, and H was the English language coordinator, so actually between us we were the people who actually introduced the profiles at that time, managing it at that level.

Int: And was the intention to introduce only English?

B: At that time, because we felt that we couldn't introduce them everywhere, and we were waiting for the maths profiles to be done because they were going to be done and introduced—and so we were waiting for those, and then we were going to introduce our own, and then we thought no we just have to wait. And we kept waiting and waiting and waiting and then it all fell apart ... Then the whole thing, the maths area fell apart. We were left with the English language, and we implemented it.

Others reported that their initial contact had been in the form of directives, with or without documentation, from the regional or central offices of their respective education ministries or departments. Some reported that the context of the introduction was significant to their reaction.

> R: ... we developed a pro forma, this is just a social science one, we developed a pro forma for actually doing an audit against the national profiles, and we were thrown in at the deep end. We had to do that, we were told we were going to be inspected for registration. We had no idea what they wanted. They didn't tell us. We developed this, and we're using it across all three campuses in our school, and then about just before the end of term 1 the CEO ... sent us out a blank pro forma which looks almost identical to this, saying please use this for your audits!
>
> Int: So you'd already done it yourself.
>
> R: We'd invented it, and now it's been ... standard across the state, so we can take credit for that.

Thus, from the outset in most interviews, the distinction was established between the substance of the initiative and implementation of it. This distinction is one which imbues the whole of this part of the book, precisely because teachers see the two aspects as so separate as to be almost unconnected. They discuss the two aspects in these terms, as many of the extracts from the interviews will reveal.

There should be no doubts, even in states and territories where bans on implementation are or have recently been in place, that teachers are not opposed to the initiative on educational grounds. Rather, they are anxious that implementation will become an imposition on schools if it is not properly negotiated, and that such an approach will result in poor implementation due to inadequate support and teacher exhaustion and resistance.

Ramifications of adopting an outcomes-based approach

Teachers report that they recognise almost instantly the huge ramifications of the adoption of the outcomes-based approach in a school. Once the work of implementation has commenced, the teachers' sense of the scale of commitment required to make it happen is that it only increases. Familiarity with the concepts and management of the organisational changes does not result in a lessening of the load for teachers. Use of an outcomes-based approach is necessarily labour-intensive, a factor which needs to be recognised and accepted for implementation not to be damaged:

> Part of the resistance in my faculty areas of maths and science is not so much about attributing levels in the reporting. We have to go through a process of assessing and reporting, so I can cope with this new system, and once I get around it, it will be fine. But then, to complement that we've got to realign our programs so that it's easy to go from what we're teaching to the statements and profiles—which means now we have to go through the whole process of pulling our program apart in Year 8 to Year 10 in say maths or science. Or analysing it, not necessarily pulling it apart, but maybe repositioning a few areas and looking at the resources we're using to ask whether they're the best resources.
>
> Instead of just teaching a book for Year 8 we may have to do different units out of all different things, which is difficult. And we have a whole lot of different teachers moving through the school, so we may be looking at getting different books, which have been

> written towards statements and profiles, so that they can say, you know, if you've done this chapter or whatever, then these outcomes would indicate that a kid has reached these sorts of levels.
>
> So it's not so much attributing of levels that we're showing much resistance to. It is time consuming, but I think that's because it's the first time. But it's the bigger picture that we're looking at—tying all of our subject areas into the whole thing, and we can see that being another large thing, but it's going to be worthwhile. You know, it's forcing us to review our offerings which is a good thing. It's just another umpteen hundred hours of work.

Whilst some who have actively used the statements and profiles maintain that the learning experiences and outcomes their students experience are not greatly changed, even these teachers assert that a re-organisation of their whole professional life has been brought about by the implementation of statements and profiles.

> I don't, no I don't think about them too much. One thing that I find was fantastic as far as student outcome statements are concerned—and there are heaps and heaps of positives—one good thing was it made me stop and have a look at things and think 'Oh I don't have to do it this way, I can do it whatever way I want, so long as I have the results'. It made me totally look at different methods of teaching ... it's the whole philosophy and the whole process of changing everything over and revamping things that's had an effect. But not ... anything could have done that, I think anything that was new, that had to be trialed. And also it was brought to my notice too to be less content-orientated and far more skill-based.

Teachers report that they recognise or believe that the adoption of the profiles and statements will require (or has required) at least the following activities at the school level:

- An audit of the entire curriculum, as it currently exists in that school. This is a mapping exercise, where the curriculum is identified by its outcomes, and the outcomes are set at particular, arbitrary year levels. In some systems, this exercise has been done at a system level, but even where systems have done whole curriculum mapping (for example, the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* [CSF] in Victoria), teachers say it is still necessary for the teachers in a school to familiarise themselves with the bigger picture and develop a common terminology with their colleagues. Such an exercise can also be important for helping teachers recognise the overlap and possible substitution of outcomes across key learning areas (KLAs).
- A complete reworking by teaching staff of their planning and delivery of the classroom curriculum in their school.
- An examination of the suitability of each outcome for each of their students.
- The development of an assessment regime which explicitly acts as an intermediary, as well as being a manifestation of a certain relationship, between teaching activities vis à vis particular outcomes.

- This new, and quite different, set of assumptions needs to be incorporated in a reporting process which, in turn, will require a high level of justification and explanation to, as well as education of, parents.
- A level of explicitness and working with colleagues in planning, pedagogy and assessment which has not previously existed. This new culture has to be nurtured.

Taken together, these activities constitute a very substantial program of change for any school and its community members to undertake. In those (few) places visited where this full implementation had been achieved—though, in deference to its evolving nature, it is never described as 'completed'—teachers were able to document how they have undertaken each of these stages, and assert that there is no way that implementation can be effected without each of them being undertaken.

There are two, overarching ramifications of implementation. Firstly, it is important that it be recognised that the implementation tasks listed above are ones which teachers, not systems, must undertake. Systems can support their teachers, but in the final analysis, teachers have this load. Secondly, it is important to recognise that this list of tasks implies a model of implementation which is predicated on a whole school approach. Teachers have to work these tasks out as a whole school. Some of the tasks could be sorted out at a subschool or faculty level, but some can *only* be achieved by whole-school decision-making and consultation processes.

The principal featured in the next extract explained how the whole school planning and working together was critical to the success the school had had in the implementation of statements and profiles:

> I: And another way how we decide, which, I think makes us special, is what we call the year level teams. Each of the three year levels, junior primary, middle primary and upper primary work very strongly in teams now, and to support that, instead of having a weekly staff meeting, we now have a fortnightly whole staff meeting and a fortnightly team meeting, and they were the sorts of issues the teams talk about and make a joint decision, at least once a fortnight.
>
> A couple of things drive it ... the ethos of this place is a reflection of the whole campus. The people here are very used to meeting after hours. And quite late into the day, five, half past five, six o'clock, and that was the way a lot of this stuff was done ... They had accepted the fact that they were going to do it, and there was the grumbling and the cynicism, but ...
>
> Int: Right. Can they see some payoffs now?
>
> I: I believe they can. I believe one of the payoffs is in programming. To me those things give, start to give our programs some more structure. And we're not going through that endless cycle of writing policy documents that we went through in the 70s and 80s which was bloody awful. The assessments are being built in ...
>
> I think in a sense the industrial action's been good because it's given people a chance to stop and reflect a bit, and they are still doing it, I mean they are still

saying, I'm not going to assign a Level 4 ... but they are still talking about outcomes and levels, so that sort of thing's still happening. I think the teaming approach, you asked about team teaching earlier, not a lot of actual team teaching happens, but the cooperative planning and talking that they do is terrific, it's wonderful. There's 11 classes in the place, and nine of the teachers would be involved in that. A couple of them aren't, for all sorts of reasons ...

Int: It's an interesting comment on people, isn't it, that with such a predominance of people sharing around, two stay out ...

I: They were involved in the team meetings and that sort of stuff.

Int: So they do go to all that?

I: Oh, they're not allowed not to. And that's not a directive from me, although they know that my clear expectation is that they will, but it's also a very clear expectation from their peers that they will.

The importance of understanding the pedagogic concepts and principles underlying the statements and profiles

Until it is demonstrated to teachers that outcomes-focused approaches can have learning benefits for their students, there can be little recognition of the benefits to be accrued from their implementation from teachers who have not worked with such approaches. Teachers are readily persuaded that their chief task is to teach and enhance student learning.

> ... any tool that is presented to you that is going to make you think retrospectively and introspectively and really clean out the cupboard, and think 'Well how have I been going' ... you can actually totally re-evaluate the way you teach, the way you plan, the way you prepare, the way you monitor, and even the way you report. I think that's good.

Teachers in some systems are more familiar with 'outcomes-based approaches' than in others. For those who are not familiar with them, it will also need to be demonstrated that 'outcomes-based' or 'outcomes-focused' approaches are inherent in the statements and profiles—it is not reasonable to expect that they will readily recognise this point. Without this recognition they are unlikely to be able to come to terms with the conceptual results; whereas familiarity and experience with outcomes approaches is a very real advantage to those attempting to implement statements and profiles.

C: We're already working with outcomes, yeah. All our documents are set up for outcomes. And we've also been through the process. For instance, you've probably been shown all these, but that's our curriculum. We use this document (Scope and Sequence) which translates the curriculum, but it translates it in terms of outcomes.

Y: And levels.

Int: And this is what's going to be changed?

C: Yes, yes. That's right. Because, as I said to you, what came very very strongly from the secondary school was that these documents have to have the profiles more clearly articulated if we are going to use the profiles. You know, it (trialing

> with the new profiles) just took forever. So in real terms we knew that we weren't prepared to do that. We simply don't have the time. So while we're comfortable with working with outcomes, those outcomes have to be in the document.

Implementation of statements and profiles requires initial work to be done with teachers on the conceptual underpinnings. It is not wise to assume that teachers have this knowledge and these understandings. Frequently the documentation includes language which is unfamiliar to teachers, or, worse, it includes language and terminology of which they are suspicious. The need to clarify with teachers the arcane terminology in the documentation, in terms of the conceptual underpinnings, is the crucial first step towards teachers' grasping the concepts and incorporating them into their pedagogy. To commence implementation by introducing the profiles, rather than working through the statements, seems to compound problems for some teachers to almost insurmountable levels. Under this approach it will probably never be possible for teachers to escape the mechanistic to embrace the conceptual. The teachers in the next two extracts provide reinforcement for this point.

> V: I think the statement has got to be read first.
>
> H: It's a philosophy.
>
> V: It is, it's a philosophy. You can put the statement away and then use all our old practice as well, along with what we're assimilating out of the statement and work our program around ... to the profiles ... But you can't just have the profiles...
>
> Int: So you used the statement just to put it all in context, and as part of the overall programming, or is it still focusing on the profile for you?
>
> V: No, the statement is the philosophy of what you're doing in any subject as far as I'm concerned.
>
> H: Yes, I think so, it reinforces you to say, okay, this is why I'm doing it. And then the other one is the practical one where you look at the outcomes, you look for what you can do to achieve that outcome ...

•••••

> M: Well you can't really understand the profile unless you read the statement. See that's where a lot of people have had problems because the government only sent schools the profile and not the statement, so if people didn't understand how to use them ... whereas I had the statement first, and then the profile, so it was easy for me to understand what was going on.
>
> Int: So ... well for everyone the statements are very important? Whereas I know in some states there's much more emphasis on the profiles than the statements.
>
> M: Well the profile means nothing if you don't have the statement.

Such conceptual understandings and skills in usage would assist in coping with other variables which teachers find it difficult to overcome, without support. Some of these include: the variations between the different systems' preferred models (documentation on some of which is put to use by teachers in other systems); variations between the systems in the grasp and implementation stage of outcomes achieved; even 'outcomes-based' as an approach independent of the statements and profiles. The following interchange reveals teachers who are concerned about the lack of accessibility of documentation, but their more general familiarity with and acceptance of the approach have led them to develop their own strategies.

S: I see the merits behind it and I see that it's more or less a better way to assess students than might ...

Int: Teach and assess?

S: Teach and assess students. And I suppose looking forward toward further planning. But people aren't really familiar with them, so it's a bit hard to sort of adopt a profiling strategy because, like I said, they're not as accessible as they should be. And I suppose just the understanding of the process.

J: The problem is not only that we don't know where the documents are, but we've so far mostly not had to use them.

S: I'd say a teacher can then see what the merits are of having a profiling system, so then they can say 'Well I wouldn't mind taking it on because I can see how it's going to help me in my teaching and evaluation'.

J: Probably, yeah, examples and models, and operation and working in other schools, and you can see the benefits and ....

Int: Who do you want the benefits to be for?

J: Kids.

Int: What sorts of things benefit the kids?

J: They are benefited by us having a background on where they're at so that we can plan more effectively for them.

F: Individual progress.

A: Children need to understand where they're at ... where they are going to be progressing, and that's one thing where the profiles would be good for students.

Int: When you teach with outcomes in your head at the moment, do you put the outcomes down on paper, and are they things you talk to kids about?

J: Yes. I've got an actual structured program that I give each kid at the start of the unit so that they know exactly how many units there are within the practical section of the course, and the theoretical section of the art course, they have to achieve.

Int: In order to do what?

J: To get a successful outcome. In each section they have a mark so that all the way through they have some idea of how they're going.

Int: And does that make any difference to the way they learn?

J: Yeah.

Int: But you're already doing it.

J: I can't say that individually. Sorry, I shouldn't have said yes, generally. I think in some cases it does, but I think in some individual cases no, it's still an uphill battle for some of the kids. But I think it gives them a clear idea of where they are at each stage so that they can do something about it.

Without such understandings, it is difficult for teachers to evaluate the benefits of implementation in the face of the effort required to implement. Nor are they in a position to determine how successful they have been in attempting to implement. Thus they are able to recognise the cost of implementing, but not the benefits. Such a situation creates cynicism about and reluctance to adopt the initiatives.

J: Give me some idea of where we are, some direction! I mean here's Tasmania, where are we in all this? We have the TCE. There's Australia and they've got all the other things and we're trying to link into them ...

R: Some of the information we get is anecdotal, but I suppose it's difficult because it's a political game, you see. You get a change of government. A new minister comes in and he says well we're only going to adopt this part of it.

And another, similar response from another state:

> But I got a booklet the other day that said CSF. CSF Technology, why did it come to me? Why isn't it sitting in the library. It's Victorian is it? That's their version. I'm looking through it and, oh we've been there, done that. Why is this state then, why are they doing this all over again? And there's a disk inside and it's got all of these goodies... Oh an interesting overlap here. All these people have already done this work, and we're doing it too. Very efficient this is!

There needs to be recognition that we have here a two-step process. First, a conceptual grasp of the rationale for the approach needs to be gained, following which there are several implementation stages which need to occur in the second part of the process. This recognition by systems and teachers will assist in the acceptance of statements and profiles by teachers (and thus encourage the implementation itself). The more this recognition occurs, the less teachers will be inclined to suspect that the purpose of this policy is no more than increased assessment or the development of yet another means of checking up on teachers. Instrumental goodwill and skill is more likely to be possible, and to occur, if a greater conceptual grasp is achieved among those who are to implement the approach.

> Well it's had a huge impact on how I assess student learning. Because it's made me refocus on outcome-based learning rather than teaching or the whole idea of learning rather than just teaching. I've refocused very firmly on the idea of cognitive development in relation to perceptual development and student achievement, realising that you've got a range of students in your class—you have to address the needs of each of them and take them from the position of cognitive development with their act, and provide activities that actually match that rather than just saying this is what we're doing, and hope some rubs off on everybody. It's made me refocus on establishing the level of conceptual development and understanding of the concept before I carry on and do more of it.

14 Factors in Successful Implementation

During the case study visits and the long conversations with teachers and administrators, there were several important aspects of system and school organisation which emerged as influential in characterising schools where the implementation of profiles could be classed as being relatively more successful. The presence of some of these factors appeared to be essential to effective implementation while others appeared to be important without being essential. The factors are discussed within these two main groups in this chapter.

Key factors affecting the adoption of the statements and profiles by teachers

Teachers' reaction to the adoption of the statements and profiles (in some cases only a proposed adoption) is predicated on the existence and effective interplay of several factors. Based on our observations, the four key factors outlined below *do* need to exist for successful implementation and carriage of the initiative. These four factors seem to have assumed the status of essential pre-conditions to effective implementation.

The sequence as listed, and the inter-relationship of the four key factors, relate to the required sequence of their appearance and to their relative importance. It seems that it is necessary to have the first in order for the second to occur, and that the third requires the pre-existence of both the first and the second factors. The fourth is an essential condition for *any* implementation to occur. The factors, which are discussed in turn below, are:

- Congruence between the curriculum and outcomes-based approaches;
- A sense of the inevitability of implementation;
- The existence of a teacher leader in the school;
- A commitment of teacher time.

1: Congruence between the curriculum and outcomes-based approaches

The most significant factor in being able to implement the profiles in teaching is congruence of the particular state or territory's curriculum to the version of the statements and profiles with which teachers have been issued.

> ... I suppose we did an audit in terms of what we do, so ... in here are our content statements of what we do, and checking out where we fit it into the profiles. Then, on the first day of this term, actually, we spent half a day and put out all these outcomes around the gymnasium, and we all went round and we just filled in where they were appropriate to what we do. The interesting thing was that at the end of the day

> everything's filled up, so there's not one strand or strand organiser that we don't actually approach or address in some way ... I was rapt, because I didn't know if we would or not.

Not surprisingly, where the congruence is slight, the task of implementing the profiles is seen by teachers as so huge as to be virtually impossible. In most such situations, teachers have urged that their state's curriculum be altered to make implementation feasible. Where there is proud ownership of the existing curriculum by teachers, they urge that the profiles be made to fit the existing curriculum.

> Int: Well, has the implementation process that's been adopted been partial—is it a sensible way to go about it? I mean, what's been learnt?
>
> C: I don't know.
>
> Int: What have you learnt?
>
> Y: That I don't like profiles.
>
> C: We just couldn't do the whole class, it's as simple as that. In terms of the trialing process, the way we feel about it, we could not do the whole class.
>
> Int: Well, what are you going to do in 1998 or whenever?
>
> C: Well then, in 1998 we'll have this document and we'll just carry on as we always have with these outcomes. This document is informed by the profiles, and we'll have those as our ... when we write up our programs we'll have these outcomes, then we can assess on them. There's not going to be any problem at all.
>
> Y: Because they will match profiles.
>
> Int: And if they don't?
>
> C: Well what if you don't ... it's up to them in there, isn't it?
>
> Int: Yes, I can see that's what you're saying, but are you sure you're going to like what you get?
>
> Y: Well we re-write it if we don't, and we send it back to them. That's what we've done previously.

There is a danger that the curriculum may be prepared in the form of a framework for the profiles approach, only to be implemented as a curriculum in itself. This can lead to situations in classrooms where teachers are 'teaching' to a particular outcome, or even one level of a particular outcome. Reports of these unsound practices were made by teachers and others:

> What this illustrates is the extreme difficulty the teachers have in moving from an input mindframe to an output mindframe. Now, many teachers were using student outcome statements as a substitute curriculum, and it's not a substitute curriculum, it's a monitoring tool to look at the performance of students. And, it's terribly, terribly difficult for teachers to move from seeing the outcome statements as a student curriculum and saying 'I have to have the resources for pseudo curriculum' to saying 'It doesn't actually matter what resources I have, and how I teach, what is being monitored is how the students actually deal with information'.

> I actually was seconded into central office for three terms and constantly came across this thing of them saying, 'Well this is just a new syllabus'—and where were all the resources for me to teach this new syllabus? And you have teachers saying 'Well if I teach Level 2 the students will be at Level 2; or if I teach Level 5 then all students will be at Level 5', which of course they're not. This is one of the greatest difficulties right now, in not having a clear enunciation of what precisely the students' outcome statements are to be used for, and once we've had really good central direction about that it will be much much easier for schools to use them.

Such activities resulted

- when there was a poor conceptual grasp of the statements and profiles approach; or
- when no assessment was undertaken subsequent to the teaching (which swiftly reveals the interconnectedness of outcomes and the impossibility of teaching to only one level of a strand); and also
- from a cynical attitude being adopted to the whole approach.

2: *A sense of the inevitability of implementation*

The second key factor in making progress with implementing the profiles in their teaching for student learning outcomes is the sense of inevitability attached, in teachers' minds, to the implementation of the profiles in their system.

> ... by and large the profiles were just filed on the shelf ... until this year ... We've undergone a fairly radical process this year in particular because of another imposition. We're coming up for registration in September, and as part of that registration process we have to undergo a whole audit of what we do against the national profiles. We must demonstrate that we are addressing the national curriculum, and exactly how we're doing it, so we've undergone a fair bit of work this year in developing those things. The profiles certainly were useful to us.

Teachers report that an important goad to a positive approach to implementation being adopted in a school is the belief, by teachers and others in the school community, that implementation is inevitable.

> It probably didn't impact on me until this term until, you know, I can't go through denial any more. They are here.

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> No, we're aware that the department is beginning to get its act together. We've known that the train has been in the tunnel, but now you can see it coming. And at the last secondary staff meeting we spent an hour and a half discussing curriculum in general terms with some points touching on outcome statements ... from which we will move on. So, although there's not a strong appetite to bring in outcome statements across the board, there's an understanding that they are coming and the school will be addressing the gradual introduction of their establishment.

Some report that their desire to come to terms with the issues and task is encouraged by the desire to be 'on top of' (and even 'in control of') this major innovation.

> We just realise that to fight against it is just wasting our own time ... Do you know what I mean? If they do a statewide reporting system and tell every school what they've got to do, it's best to design your own thing within the context.

Conversely, some of those who believe implementation is not inevitable tend to hope that, by ignoring the impetus, 'it will go away', or are quite convinced that it has no value for them or their students, and thus they do not engage in implementation.

> I know we had a discussion on profiles, just those and science and technology down in the Prep and Year 1 area and we just decided that we could tick a box on them, and the next month the child may not have that concept. It was just too up and down, and we felt that testing in those areas was just too difficult—and it was ... as far as ... you know, the anecdotal evidence and observations, we were happy with that, but we didn't want to have on paper, 'this child knows that rain comes from clouds' because the next month they may not.

3: *The existence of a teacher leader in the school*

In schools where the two previous factors are at play in a positive sense, it seems to be crucial to effective implementation that there be a 'teacher leader' within the school. The person who takes the leadership role is generally motivated by personal commitment to the goals and the benefits, for students and school staff, which they see as being obtained by the implementation of the profiles.

Such a person may have recently had a previous position within the system, possibly outside the school, which has allowed him or her to become familiar with the structures and jargon of the statements and profiles—a familiarity that is invaluable to colleagues. This leader's familiarity is thus translated into documentation and teacher talk for colleagues, and is firmly contextualised in that school's learning and teaching environment.

> T: The staff that we've got in our higher positions, like H and B, they're all really motivated and up with all the current trends.
>
> Int: So, it's called leadership?
>
> T: Yeah! And it's so easily passed down to everyone who wants to be involved.

Teachers in some schools assert that without a person in this kind of role they would never have been able to persist with the task of interpreting the documentation and implementation process. But, additionally, they could never have been able or prepared to re-examine their teaching philosophy and practice in the way this initiative has enabled (some would say, required) them to do. Staff can articulate how they have felt supported.

> A: I think one of the benefits too, I'm not quite sure how the department worked here in the past, but one of the benefits I had of working in this department is everyone's quite keen to talk about what they're doing in the classroom all the time. And the sharing of ideas and the sharing of methods of keeping up with the paperwork or the anecdotal records and so on, is really quite important. And we'll quite often just be chatting about something and people say 'Oh can I do this or that' sort of thing and that's where our actual reporting or our frameworks or whatever are generated from, those anecdotal discussions.

P: Because people come in at lunch time and go 'Oh wow I just had this great lesson' and say what they did and we all sort of go 'Oh that's good' and then go off and try it, and so it's the reactions that we have are like we're ... *(all in one giant)* classroom. For example, one person will change something and everybody notices so then one by one we all take it on board and try it out. But it makes it a lot more interesting, and the kids are taking it on too.

If in a designated position, such as Curriculum Coordinator, this person is able to lead teachers actively by modelling a series of strategies and processes for other teachers to follow. If there is no time or coordinator position designated for the school-based work, it can still proceed, but only at a much slower pace, as the following teacher, seconded by her system to facilitate implementation, reported:

> ... in primary schools we can't have coordinators because that becomes a paid position then, so we called them key teachers, and having to go to that extent, we all visited the principals first when we went to the school but then after that we visited the key teachers. That made it easier for the principals because whilst they were sort of facilitating the change process they didn't necessarily need to have the actual hands on work and it was sometimes easier to work with the teachers because then they generated the change at staff meetings and so on rather than it coming from the top down.

The existence and leadership of significant persons expedites and increases the level of understanding of other staff. This in turn increases the acceptance by other staff and decreases the time required for them to accept and undertake the implementation strategies.

Int: So the collegiality is one of the things that keeps it going?

C: Yeah. And that's something that's been quite dominant in English, I think.

Int: And do you think that leadership has been really important?

Y: Yes, I do. I mean, most of us found it really difficult to understand, and I think C supported and encouraged and whipped us into line. She knew so much about it all already.

Int: Yes, familiarity really makes a hell of a difference doesn't it.

Y: For those who came to it new and there were a few people to whom it was new ... she was important alright.

It is worth commenting that in most schools which are advanced and comfortable with statements and profiles, the leadership includes a principal who is enthusiastic and insightful about the process, knowledgeable in pedagogic matters, interested in having staff as supported as possible, skilled in systemic networks and other matters, proud of her or his staff and the school and prepared to sing their praises.

G: But I think what you said before, like it's logical, if you know yourselves what you want to achieve, then you just have to plan a path to achieve that.

Int: It would also be because you work as a community, as a professional community, so that you see you actually have joint goals. 'You' means everyone.

G: We only get allocated four curriculum days from the CEO so we sit down and we decide what we're going to use them for ... But then we might be able to wangle in another day.

Int: Has the CEO said the CSFs are the basis for your planning?

G: Well they have, and that's why they've probably gone and put those inservices on the outcomes ... I suppose we took it up fairly early I guess. But the teachers have all done a great job, I mean their documents, they are working documents for them ... I was really impressed with everybody because they all came up with something that was a bit different ... like we had a day on it, you know, that J (curriculum coordinator) ran, and the people just took it up.

J: But from that day though people spent hours of their own time doing it.

G: But then the maximum relief time that we're supposed to give our staff is only an hour a week, so I mean that's nothing. They're terrific the way they're really flexible ... they do a lot in their own time.

Systems can certainly expedite the adoption of statements and profiles by appointing experienced teachers, who have the appropriate knowledge and skills plus the respect of their colleagues, to designated positions which carry a serious time allocation in which to do the work. These comments and criteria apply to teacher leaders in all systems and schools. Whilst the tasks of leaders are similar in primary and secondary schools, it could be argued that a leader in a secondary school needs even more time than one in a primary school, because of the greater scale of the coordination task (measured by range and disparate nature of the curriculum, greater number of staff and their separation into discrete faculties, and greater number of students).

4: A commitment of teacher time

In order to achieve a high degree of quality implementation of such a complex and far-reaching initiative, a significant quantity of time is required. The amount of time required for teachers, individually and in collegial groups, to reflect on their practice and to talk through and document the necessary changes, is huge. In places where exemplary work has been done, vast quantities of time have been necessary. This time has been supplied by teachers staying at school for long hours after classes are finished, often several nights a week, for several terms on end.

When asked about the amount of time spent in inducting themselves into this approach to teaching, learning, assessing and reporting, and whether they believe the required time will diminish once implementation has been achieved, teachers are frequently not prepared to express confidence on this score. It is seen as an inherently time consuming process.

Y: I was really distressed by the whole ordeal. I found it very difficult, very frustrating.

Int: Can you work out why?

Y: Because it's all so new, I guess. And you're not sure if you're doing it right ... but it took so long.

Int: What part of it took a long time?

Y: Everything. It didn't matter what you did, it took a long time.

Some are not so worried, though this extract only refers to one part of the process.

> I think it's quite user friendly for teachers. But the problem is that a lot of teachers don't have enough confidence in their own ability to make judgements. Like ... we took them on board and talked about our initial judgements a lot so I guess we got confidence a lot quicker and I find I'm quite successful now. I'm quite happy to read through and make judgements quickly.

In places where time has been spent by teachers attempting to understand the statements and profiles approach, without a sense of progress being gained, there is commonly one or more of the other three essential factors missing. In the following extract, the teachers had problems with system-level changes and uncertainties arising from those changes. In such circumstances teachers feel their time has been wasted and their goodwill exploited.

B: The only thing with us is that we look at new initiatives and we take them on board if we think that they're worthwhile. Unfortunately what happens is sometimes there's new initiatives that come in and we take them on board and we work with them, and we'd refine them and develop them and then suddenly they're not an initiative any more and they've been thrown out the window ... We work hard here to do this, and then it's not us who's dropped it it's, you know, the powers that be.

H: It's what happened with the first profile,

Int: Yes, the national ...

H: B and I told the staff, sorry, wrong profile, Government's changed it's mind. It was like this huge weight came down and the enthusiasm just dwindled and B and I just felt so squashed and hurt and whatever, and it wasn't really our fault.

B: Everyone acknowledged that it wasn't our muck up, it was the change of Government that changed it.

Int: Might it have been possible, from those ashes, to suggest that because people had worked through the process they had the concept, and it was easier for them to pick up on the new ones?

H: We did do that.

B: We did that.

H: We sort of let it smoulder for a while, but we ...

B: And we talked about, you know, the importance of the processes that we'd see in place and how useful they were, and how we can still be positive on our growth on those sorts of things.

H: But the actual day we told them, they were very ready to go and jump off the bridge.

Int: And you must have been too.

B: The thing was, when the idea of the national profiles, and the philosophy of having a curriculum right across Australia ... we did a lot of work on that. I went to training sessions on the national profiles and we did surveys and we did this, and, you know, we did so much work on that, and then on the Victorian ones. They decided okay we were going to use our Victorian profile, and then it even got taken away from that to actually, well we're going to develop our own curriculum and we don't really care what the other states are doing. That was disappointing, I think. It was just because I had this, I had this belief that, yeah, we're suddenly going to pool everything together, we're going to have this curriculum that is married between states, and, you know, it was the ideal—heaven can be that, but in the real world it just couldn't happen.

Int: No.

B: And that's where you start to lose your morale in the staff. And I really have no answers when somebody says 'Why should we do it, we did it before, and it's changed, and there is no sense to it'.

For successful implementation, the goodwill of principals and teachers *must* be gained and maintained. In circumstances like the above, it is hard to see how these teachers can be reassured, their goodwill retrieved. References to time, spent well or wasted, were frequently made by teachers during the interviews.

In summary

To summarise, it seems from this study that the four factors described above, taken together, are essential to the effective implementation of such a wide-reaching change as the adoption of statements and profiles. In all the schools visited where these four factors were found to exist, and had met the constraints of the sequence as described, implementation appeared to be successful (which is not to say complete). In the other schools visited, implementation seemed to have been markedly less successful and the teachers could readily comment on why this was so.

In addition, in each of the places where implementation was deemed successful, staff members involved thought the teaching and learning experiences of staff and students have improved as a result of the implementation of an outcomes-based approach.

To the extent that generalisations can be made, it seems that these four factors, taken together, are less likely to apply to teachers and their professional environments in secondary schools than in primary schools. (Reference will be made to this point in later chapters.) As was seen in one of the extracts earlier in the chapter, the absence of the first factor, *Congruence between the curriculum and the relevant outcomes-based approach* can, alone, prevent effective implementation of the approach, and there were a number of examples of this scenario having arisen in trialing.

Given the above provisos, the four factors described and discussed above seem unlikely to apply in independent schools, most especially the second factor: *A sense of the inevitability of implementation.* Implementation is not mandated in non-government schools, which may be the explanation for the low level of implementation revealed in the survey responses from schools in the independent sector in comparison with the implementation by other systems in the same locale. Within the Catholic system, marked variations were observed from region to region, and the second factor is the one that seemed to be most frequently missing.

Other important factors

There are a number of other factors which we believe have a lesser, but nonetheless significant, impact on implementation. Each of them should be seen in relation to the four key factors already outlined. The absence of any one or even several of these additional factors does not seem to be sufficient to prevent implementation, though it can adversely affect it. The compounding of a teacher's or staff's confusion or opposition to this initiative is achieved incrementally. When many factors are missing, implementation is rendered that much more difficult.

5: The accessibility of documentation

Language

Teachers have three main concerns regarding the accessibility of documentation from their systems. The first and principal concern relates to the incomprehensibility of the language employed in the documents. It is not that the language is beyond comprehension, but that it is arcane, it has meaning specific to this context, and teachers know they need to understand *exactly* what it means to them, if they are to implement the initiative. Teachers talk about this a great deal.

R: I think, you know, once you've read it, once you've talked it over with a group, you start to understand, but initially it was a huge amount of information to digest.

J: When you look at it initially it just puts you off completely, you don't even want to persevere with it.

S: ... I still find, I just need to constantly be refreshing my memory because I still get confused with the strands and the modes and all that sort of terminology. I have to stop and think well the level is this, and the strand is this ...

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Int: If a teacher is having problems, where do they turn to?

G: They usually just go screaming into the maths office, I can't do this, show me how to do it, what can I do for this? I don't understand, J in particular has a lot of problems understanding the phrasing of the actual outcomes and she will come in a lot saying, what does this mean, who's written this stuff? And she has a lot of problems with it, and somebody else will be in there and will go 'Well that's what I think it means' and then somebody will pipe up with 'No I think it means this'.

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... the first one's the hardest, so that suddenly, you know, your band and your strand and your level, all those cross-curricular perspectives and things like that are not a foreign

> language, so the committee when introducing a new learning area is really able to focus on the key issues that that particular learning area is pushing forwards. They're beginning to understand, they understand it, you don't have to go over that again, which is really good.

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> And the general feedback I've been getting is that everybody makes out like it's a big deal but when you sit down and do it it's really not that bad. It's just that people put a lot of pressure on themselves when they start out and they expect it to be hard. Yeah, and a lot of the time they don't trust their own judgements. If they're doing it in isolation they sort of think well how do I know I'm right? They really do need to talk to someone about it to be more comfortable.

This point connects with the earlier, larger one, treated under the section 'The importance of understanding the pedagogic concepts and principles underlying the statements and profiles' in Chapter 13. Familiarity with the documentation, according to teachers, *may* diminish the power of this factor to inhibit implementation, but that is less than certain.

Amount

The second aspect of the documentation which concerns teachers is the sheer bulk of it.

> I would say that one of the problems is the massive amount of documentation you've got to go through first and link it all together. It's so longwinded, whoever formulated this, I mean there are two books for each of the eight areas, and then you, you have to spend a lot of time reading, absorbing and then comparing what other people have said and—the documentation is just too long-winded.

Changing content

The third aspect of the documentation which concerns teachers is the changing parameters of the documentation arriving in schools, as their systems develop their positions on the matter, and the difficulty they have in keeping up with the system's changes. This results in teachers not having a clear sense of the latest view of this initiative. Thus, lacking the confidence to continue with their reflection and action on the concepts, and on the organisational and pedagogic strategies, they feel immobilised.

> The DSE might come out and say you have to ... I mean, it wouldn't surprise me if they came out and said you have to include this on your report. So I think in some ways, you know, we're sort of readying ourselves. Well I personally see this thing unfolding. And then, okay if we don't get any DSE advice, well we'll go ahead I guess. But I mean there'd be nothing worse than reviewing our reporting and us deciding we want to do this, change our reporting format for the start of next year and then have to change it again because the system changes its position and issues instructions. It's the last thing we want to do.

In fairness to the systems, this third point is something of a cleft stick for them. They can be characterised as either not engaging sufficiently with the teachers and other stakeholders (which consultation necessarily results in the changing documentation that teachers have complained about, as development takes place) or as adopting an inappropriate top-down model of implementation.

The solution lies in systems' using a much clearer nomenclature for information sent to schools, and the adoption of the strategy of having one person in the school who, having sufficient time to do the necessary reading and interpreting of the documentation, can be responsible for the dissemination of the system's current position to the teachers (and perhaps, parents).

> ... We have what we call coordinator status, so one person sees all the information and seminars and things, and they skill themselves up in readiness for when the school decides that's going to be a priority in the school and it assumes committee status, and that's when the rest of the staff then become familiar with the statements and profiles.

6: Flexibility in interpretation of student outcomes and levels

The degree of flexibility which teachers perceive as both possible and necessary in their interpretation of the profiles and all stages of the teaching and learning process, including assessment and reporting, is a significant factor in implementation. They say that a degree of flexibility is to be expected and must be allowed, otherwise the individual student's needs cannot be accommodated.

> ... It's just the flexibility of resourcing and the flexibility of time and being able to spend time working with students on areas of need. In unit curriculum we never had that opportunity because there was always a deadline, we had to get through so many tasks in such a short period.

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> ... some of them, because I had my Year 8 class who were really clever students, and sometimes they would have Level 7 or 8 in some places, some of their speaking, especially. Some of their writing is just outstanding. And then other things are in Level 5 or Level 6.

The significance of this factor varies. Its absence especially grows in importance where the absence of other factors looms large. (See the previous section on 'Documentation' and the later sections on 'Low recognition for teacher professionalism', 'Attitudes of school populations' and 'Acceptance of and agreement with levels'.)

Teachers usually do not see their application of the levels as coming from one teacher, but being the result of collaboration. They therefore report that too rigorous a 'moderation' or 'monitoring' by systems of teachers' application of the profiles will heavily mitigate against teachers' willingness to remain involved. Such an approach will fuel those suspicions, previously mentioned, that statements and profiles are no more than an assessment regime and a check on teachers.

> It's just a monster which is not designed to meet the needs of schools or kids. It's designed to meet the needs of people who are sitting in offices and who wish to assess, to validate, to say look how well we've done, or not necessarily, or look how badly this school or that school's going.

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Most teachers who have experienced statements and profiles have only done so in a trialing or introductory mode, and at this stage of implementation, the 'flexibility' factor strikes them as important. Once implementation on a broader scale (that is on all KLAs or at all year levels, or ultimately, both) is routinely undertaken, this perceived need for flexibility may recede in importance. Also, the potential conflict between the legitimate need of systems (and other clients) for consistency of the application of the profile levels and the trust that can be put in teacher judgement may just not materialise. Experience in South Australia, the state which is most advanced in the implementing of statements and profiles, would suggest that, with time and experience, teachers become more relaxed about this issue, as their capacities to cope with the approach increase (see the discussion of the next factor).

> M: But A (one of the experienced teachers) is now doing that as a matter of course, in anything. She'll do a bit of work from a subject area and say 'Right, that's Level 2 or Level 3'.
>
> Int: And she decides that beforehand?
>
> M: No, she decides what level it is on the outcome, the work the child has produced, but it's becoming as familiar to her, almost, as, you know, giving a mark out of ten used to be. Remember the old compositions we had to mark, and we had to give the mark out of ten?
>
> K: Same thing really, isn't it?
>
> M: Yeah, it really is. It's the gut feelings about the kids ESUs (Essential Skills and Understandings) if you like.
>
> Int: And it's familiarity with the language, and the standards. So does that just mean that A's become more confident, or that she's just made a decision to stop dithering, or ...
>
> M: All of those.
>
> K: I think what you find is you start to find what works.

7: Acceptance of and agreement with 'levels' ascribed

Issues of 'levelness'

The degree of teacher acceptance of, and agreement with, the pointers/descriptors in the profiles and the setting of levels in relation to the stages at which the students are ostensibly learning is important to how well the implementation proceeds. Teachers' capacity to discuss and resolve these 'demarcation disputes' is closely related to their confidence with the documentation and the strength of their conceptual grasp of the statements and profiles. Resolution of issues of 'levelness' also relates to their professional relations with colleagues and how long they have been able to devote to clarification of the kinds of outcomes they expect to observe at each level. This is the importance of time again.

> J: Well, I mean you look at the writing in the text for English—try to use it! So I suppose what you really need is to be able to have work which demonstrates—to get in the teacher's mind—what work is Level 4 and what work is Level 5 and

> what demonstrates this and what doesn't. I mean, when you're marking English, you have ten through to one and you have the descriptors of what it would indicate for each one, and so a ten would say this and this and this and this, and a one would be this. You see—and it takes a while for a group of teachers like that who are just doing it, to come to a common understanding through moderation, about the value of a piece of work and what it does demonstrate. So there will be a lot of time for the teacher to work out the practice of what this actually says ...
>
> R: There's that commonality and I think that's the crux of the matter.
>
> J: You come to a common agreement about things, yeah, eventually.
>
> R: ... what the Level 5 achievement really means, and it has to, to the whole staff.

One teacher, reporting on a high degree of disagreement between teachers at a workshop, was not concerned about the discrepancy.

> Yes. They were different levels, and it comes out in human judgement, but you still need to have the discussion. Even if I think they're on Level 2 and someone else comes along and says 'Oh, they're Level 3 in communication', and as long as they're challenging them all the time and pushing them along, (you need the discussion). That's why, I think as a planning tool and as a monitoring tool they're fabulous. I do not like them as a reporting tool. I've said that for two years now and I still don't like them.

The process of resolution is essentially a moderation process, involving teachers comparing pieces of work, ascribing levels and clarifying the meanings of the documentation. But, unlike other moderation processes, its purpose and focus are not to validate an assessment *per se*, but to enable teachers to extrapolate from the discussion a clearer view of how certain tasks and assessments indicate a level. Teachers report that this difference in focus profoundly alters the experience, making it a unique learning experience for them. They seem to be prepared to adopt an outcomes model for their own learning in this, as many of the extracts reveal.

Comparability across learning areas

Another area of concern, as expressed by teachers, relates to the setting of levels across KLAs. Given that part of the planning and programming within a school requires that a close look be given to the overlapping of one KLA's outcomes with those of another, so also should the levels awarded to the particular, related tasks be scrutinised. In the few places where the implementation is so advanced that this issue is a live one, the need to monitor and moderate these differences, especially at the reporting stage, is seen as fraught with difficulties. Its resolution will require detailed strategies as well as goodwill from parents and professionalism from teachers.

> There's a definite problem in reporting on the overlap. For example: Home Economics is concerned that they're not attributing levels, but within their course there's a 'People and food' strand, and that 'People and food' strand also appears in, well it appears in HPE. Now how does our Home Ec. teacher report on our format? We're not going to let her, well we're saying we shouldn't let her because when a parent speaks to us on the level that we decide for 'People and food' she's not there at the interview. We may have to have that happen. So the problem of overlap—it's also an issue for the strand of

> 'Safety' in HPE because 'Safety' appears in a number, in fact, in almost all of them. Certainly Technology, HPE and Home Ec. there's 'Safety', so how do you report across the eight areas? That's an issue.

Benefit of familiarity

It should be noted that teachers who are familiar with the levels find little to disagree with the levels as set. This observation is a more certain one for the English and mathematics profiles, since these have been much more commonly introduced than any other profiles. To the extent that the national profiles are recognisably inherent in the state and territory versions, these findings suggest that the original writers of the national profiles (at least for English and mathematics) consulted effectively with teachers. They seem to find that the levels as described in the profiles represent the school populations pretty much as they exist in the real world of the classroom.

With high levels of acceptance and agreement with the concept and practice of the levels as described, comes a greater, consequent ease of adoption of the whole initiative. As with other factors, the degree of congruence which teachers perceive as existing between their role (as mediators of their students' needs) and the role the system wishes them to undertake is critical to their ability to proceed.

There is further discussion of assessment issues in Chapter 16.

8: The capacities of teachers

There seem to be several important aspects, related to teachers' capacities, which influence the likelihood of successful implementation at school level.

Teacher experience and confidence

The first of these aspects is teachers' pedagogic confidence and experience (which relate to their conceptual grasp of the statements and profiles, as discussed earlier). A teacher's initial and subsequent training (professional development) can have a significant bearing on the power of this aspect. Both the third and fourth key factors analysed above: *The existence of a teacher leader in the school* and *A commitment of teacher time,* impinge closely on teachers' level of confidence. Our visits indicated that where the school-based leader was strong, and the school provided appropriate opportunity for teacher reflection, both new and experienced teachers were able to gain sufficient understandings and skills for effective implementation.

> V: ... a lot of the teachers don't accept it ... it's very hard to accept the change.
>
> H: Yes, because they feel that it's too much pressure on them and they want to just go inside, shut the door, and ...
>
> Int: And it's threatening for them too ... they've been doing it for twenty years and you're telling them it's wrong.
>
> H: But ... looking at your bands and strands, a lot of what we have been doing for all these years is still there. That's the way ...

V: ... that you can look in there and justify what you've been doing.

This first-year out teacher found the effect was positive:

M: Oh, I thought they'd been really good. It helps me by looking through them just to know where I'm supposed to be, what I'm supposed to be teaching, like if I look at the outcomes then I can plan my units or lessons around what the outcomes are supposed to be, so that's been good, and it's interesting going to the seminars because I'm fairly young. I did all this about statements and profiles last year at Uni and with everyone else, a lot of people say well I don't know anything about them, because they've been teaching for a long time. So it's been good because I've had a little bit, a bit ahead over everybody else, so it's been good.

... I've done everything basically off my own bat because when I got here, the teachers that were here last year took what they had with them, so there was nothing here. So I had to do everything from scratch.

Int: How big was the school?

S: About three hundred students, kindergarten to grade 10.

Int: So how many English teachers are there?

M: I take Grade 8, Grade 9, Grade 10 and Grade 11 English and someone else takes two Grade 7 classes.

Int: So you are the secondary English teacher, and SOSE, do you do all the SOSE as well?

M: I take Grade 9 to Grade 11 SOSE, and someone else takes Grade 8 and another teacher takes Grade 7.

Professional development and teacher networks

Many other teachers felt that they each needed to receive professional development, external to the school.

> The opportunity like that to speak with other people, that are doing it—the different conferences. I probably went to four in the period that I was doing them, and I always came back, you know that was what we needed, to speak with other people ... our problems, practice, on our monitoring and all that sort of stuff.

Energy in several states and territories has been put into network initiatives, and the researchers were able to listen to a range of comments on the effectiveness of those initiatives, as experienced by those teachers. Most teachers, especially those in secondary schools, felt that the network that counted was the one operating within their own school (not that it was always treated as if it were a fully operating one!).

R: By the very nature of the geographical constraints of the place, yeah, we've got networks going in English and in SOSE ... We hope to get together as a group and develop some resources and, for people who want to take units on, that sort of thing. So that started off very informally, and now it's grown, and you know, schools have seen the value of networking. It's been very valuable to meet with other schools and know that there are key people in those schools who can get together and network and make the whole job easier. It's just that each learning area somehow has seemed to come together, which is really good. Yeah.

Int: So that was something to really focus on.

R: That's right. And it's beaut because, you know, you have people there from the high school and that's the only high school in the valley. We've got the district high schools.

Int: Do you have fairly good communication then with the senior schools?

R: Yeah, not too bad. That's really good. And we've got two non-government schools in the valley too. They join in as well.

Some of the problems with other networks were outlined. NPDP reporting suggests there are a number of essential pre-conditions for a productive network, and these pre-conditions do not seem to have been met in the examples that follow.

K: The whole idea of setting up the networks was for the schools to help one another, and one of the first tasks was doing an audit of what people were doing, and then looking at where each school was and how they could perhaps help other schools in terms of introducing the CSF. Now, that's worked with limited success, and I say limited in that it seems that the primary schools in particular, they've been concentrating mostly on English and maths, although it has been reasonable, and the rest have virtually ...

Int: Not happened?

K: Not happening much at all, and the other handicap has been that in this particular district network we've got one secondary school, and the rest are primary schools, so from our point of view we're not getting much. We're actually giving to the primary schools, so that's another demand that I see, in that we don't really benefit much at all from the networks. The primary schools I think are.

Int: Could you enlarge your network to include other secondaries?

K: Well part of the problem is travel. Even getting people to network meetings because of the distances that people have to travel after work.

Int: Is there a history of linking between the secondary schools in the region?

G: None whatever. They used to be in another region. As you know there's a secondary college, with six hundred students, within a hundred yards of this school, and we don't talk to each other ...

Int: So shouldn't you ...?

M: No, I'd prefer to talk to someone from a state system, rather than from across the road. I don't know what they're doing. So off the top of my head, I'd prefer to talk to someone else that's trying to do the same stuff that we're doing, say another secondary state school.

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G: There were network meetings. They had the KLA development networks. Everyone went to the different schools in the area, so the primary schools and the secondary schools went, and those meetings have been ongoing. *(for the*

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secondary schools) so the KLAs or a person's gone from the school to each KLA, so that's been a form of support.

J: ... but that's the whole point, it was a combined *(i.e. primary and secondary)* thing.

G: But they realised that. They said they would separate them.

J: There was a lot of disinterest in one group, whenever something was spoken about by the other group.

Pre-service training

Several teachers commented on the need for the teacher training institutions to update the knowledge and understandings of their staff, so that effective training of new teachers could result. This was seen as an obvious goal which was rarely achieved, even in the state which was most advanced in its implementation. The lack of appropriate training courses, at least their lack of availability, was seen as evidence of poor planning by the systems, since this is regarded as being well within their ambit of influence.

> We've always had that problem with trying to whip the tertiary institutions into providing people with appropriate, what we would deem to be appropriate training that would allow them to slot into the job reasonably painlessly.

Where a school gained a graduate well trained in the appropriate strategies, albeit from another state, it counted itself very fortunate.

Int: So, the work that you're doing here in terms of outcomes-based work, is that relatively new for you, or have you always done outcomes-based work?

T: This is my first job, here. I'm only a recent Maths and Science teacher.

Int: So if you graduated from Victoria, you'd have done some *Curriculum and Standards Frameworks* work in your training?

T: Yes. Yeah, we did all that.

Int: So that's outcomes-based.

T Actually I'm Soc. Ed. (SOSE) trained.

Int: What are you teaching here?

T: Maths and Science.

Int: This is not a worry to you?

T: No. Not really—see Maths is actually in my second method. The Science is different, but it's not really a big worry to me because a lot of the stuff I've done in Soc. Ed. sort of helps.

Int: As a methodology do you mean?

T: And because I'm teaching Years 7 and 8. I mean, you know, at times I miss teaching Soc. Ed., but I'm not really concerned by the fact I'm not teaching my areas ... and the content isn't the thing. It's how you teach it and it's all the outcome stuff, and in that respect it's knowing good ways to teach Science and applying the same method and principles that I would use in Soc. Ed. into Science in terms of that outcomes stuff, in terms of group work or teacher facilitating rather than sort of teaching and lecturing.

Transferring that to Science, to an area where you're not a hundred per cent confident with the content, is the challenge because the thing is that when you tend to not be really familiar with your subject area, that's when you revert into doing less challenging or less facilitating types of teaching, where you revert to telling them more because you just know it yourself. But so far it's been alright.

I have no problem teaching, but the concern is where are the outcomes that I have to do for Year 7 and 8 Science so that I know that these kids have got the things that they need for Year 9 and 10—and I think that's not happening ... I have a feeling that we're not really actually linking it in very successfully, and it's a bit haphazard.

Int: So you really need the conversation to be about what outcomes do we want from these units of work rather than what we think we will do in the units of work?

T: Yeah.

Int: And are you helping in the conversation?

T: I'm trying. But I just think the trouble is that ... every time you start a new theme or topic, that involves looking at the content, and you're not necessarily thinking about the process ... See, I use my Curriculum and Standards ... I've got that here, I use that all the time. Just because I like the ideas that it talks about, you know, that sort of process, so, yeah I think that can be applied in different subject areas.

The transferability of these understandings between different systems and even between different KLAs and curricula is a striking feature of this story. It further illustrates the pivotal importance of teachers' having a conceptual grasp of approaches, in order to implement them (see Chapter 13).

Age of teachers

Teachers' age does not appear to be a consistent aspect in the effectiveness of implementation. Older teachers seem no less able to adapt their practice than the younger, less experienced ones. In fact the older teachers, in both primary and secondary levels, can find themselves re-invigorated by the possibilities.

Int: Is it true to say that some of the older members of staff have found it harder than the younger? If you were just trying to find why is it that some people found it more difficult than others?

J: Well I'm the oldest member of staff. (J is the coordinator–leader.)

Int: Fair enough. Is it just that some people were more rigid?

J: I think it was from where people had come from, you know, it really wasn't the oldest member of staff.

G: No. I mean you can even have young teachers who are very rigid, but I mean, we're just willing to give anything a go.

J: Well if you've taught in a, you know a certain way for ten years or whatever, and something like this comes up, for some people it's easier to adapt, and for others it's not as easy.

Int: Yes, I've met a fair bit of fear in this project.

J: And yet, it's not really like a change of teaching, it's a change of focus.

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> ... The biggest problem I find—most of the staff teaching the humanities side have been teaching fifteen to twenty years, where outcomes-based is really fairly new, they came through a system and they were happy with the way they taught, and teachers are very slow to change. Especially if they've been around for a long time ... [but then] ... H, who has just retired, she was probably the most creative teacher on staff. She's brilliant ... and she's in her fifties. You know, it's the chronologically gifted, who have changed the most.

Enhancement of teachers' capacities

Teachers generally report that where the whole experience has been a satisfying one, their professional capacities have been enhanced and they feel that they are teaching better than at any other period in their time.

> It's been marvellous in English. I've worked in a number of systems, and 'Viewing', for example, is a dirty word in some systems. We never watch film, we never do anything about this. In other systems 'Speaking' has been an equivalent to 'Reading and writing'. And the profile has actually highlighted these things. It's highlighted them and said they are legitimate modes which we should examine and which we should cover. So I think yes, it's been marvellous from the point of view of English ... Yes, it's been good in so far as it has allowed a lot of teachers to find what they do is okay and it has pointed out to them other things that they could do which would also be okay.

In such instances teachers' pedagogic confidence rests with their trust of colleagues. Feeling professionally safe, one grows professionally.

9: Lack of recognition for teacher professionalism

The way in which recognition of the highly professional work in schools, both in and out of school hours and under the gaze of peers and senior colleagues, is reluctantly and tardily given, is depressing to staff and perplexing to researchers. This lack of recognition by systems, and even by some principals it seems, of the complex nature of the professional and managerial change that is being undertaken by teachers, is a serious impediment to the effective implementation of statements and profiles.

In the light of their feelings of being undervalued, teachers say that the chief pay-off for them, since recognition of the complexity and scale of the changes being sought from and practised by them is not forthcoming, is their professional pride and an enhanced collegiality.

> It's collegiate support that I think I'm valuing in this area—what have you got there, show me what you've done. Oh right, yes, I'll go and grab that out of their books or that out of their folders and it's fine. Staffroom talk is extremely strong and that's in a small school.

Where systems only allow for and/or can accommodate private benefits and motivations for teachers' work, they are seeking to apply to teaching and learning, a style of motivation and reward which does not operate anywhere else in the open market economy. Teachers occupy places as clients and so on in the open market economy. They are not ignorant of its modes of operation. Most sense the value of their skills and work and they feel these are undervalued. They see this special treatment of their work as hypocritical and patronising.

> M: And teachers can subvert anything they like, and ... and they can try as hard as they like—the top-down type of approach has never worked and will not work in this instance. It must rise from the ground up in a way that's run and managed by teachers. Now whether they resource that rising of the idea, I think they're better off investing in teachers understanding what they are doing ... that spectrum rather than the one the Board of Studies is considering ...
>
> Int: But what you've just described as what you're doing and attempting to do more of in your teaching, is exactly what I imagine they want.
>
> M: But, I mean, how can that be achieved ...?
>
> Int: So you're suggesting they've got to resource that?
>
> M: Yes. I mean how else ...?

The researchers were continually impressed by the range of managerial skills encountered within schools. Yet even in systems which had made a commitment to the implementation, there was generally, at best, two hours a week for any coordination inside the school to see the task to fruition. Compared to the capitalisation at a system level, with the expense on glossy documentation, the computer programs for recording and storing of data and the 'employment of empire builders in head office', teachers see the investment as being skewed, the attitude towards them as being inappropriate and exploitative.

> Now my understanding of profiles, the original thing was that you could trust teacher's judgements on kids. But the Board of Studies now seems to think you can't trust the teachers, so they say 'we will cross check the profiles with the external assessment programs that we have in place. We will use them to check each other'.

Such an approach is unlikely to result in system-wide or even school-wide reform, for at least two reasons. Firstly, it produces such a jaundiced workforce that heart-felt implementation will be refused. Secondly, it results in insufficient resources being allocated to create the pre-conditions of successful implementation. In our extensive search for best practice the research team located any number of sow's ears and precious few silk purses. This trend is only going to continue, unless and until the approach to implementation changes. Teachers are able to identify, analyse and characterise the patterns. By way of illustration, the following school's teachers will probably never have time to implement statements and profiles without specific allocation of time and responsibility.

> 'I'm quite happy to do it and I'm quite happy to do all the extra work of implementing it and the notion of school-based anything development, and yet ... but it literally is the pressure of time ... But I have an admin. meeting on Monday night, we have a staff

> meeting on Tuesday night, and I'm a mentor to a beginning teacher. And it's often not until Thursday that I can do anything in class, and we've all given, we've all negotiated and we're spent. I think, well it started off as half an hour a week, *(as a staff working together on statements and profiles)* but they're now an hour a fortnight to do curriculum writing. And that's on top of any other meetings that we might need to, like there was a Parent and Staff meeting last night. A lot of the teachers went to that to represent the staff, and—our school is under review through the CEO, and I'm staff rep. on that, so that's tomorrow night, and I'm studying as well ... and of course we've all got families and where do they fit into the whole scheme of things? Sometimes you literally feel like you're married to the job.

This 'lack of recognition' factor acts more insidiously in secondary schools, due to the relative isolation of staff (in comparison with primary schools) in KLA departments, the nature of the curriculum, and their separate teachers' staff rooms. Teachers are, when separated from each other, often unaware of and unable to support another teacher's innovation, insight and hard work. They are unable to build on one another's work, because they don't know about it. This primary teacher was a in K-12 district school:

> Well I'd like to say something. I received no professional development until I'd been trialing it for a year. And, it wasn't until it was the end of that first year that I realised that there were people living outside who were actually trialing these statements.

One school felt that its success in implementation was due in large part to the fact that it was a combined primary and secondary school, not arranged on a faculties basis.

> P: I reckon because we're an R to 12 school and because of our structure, and because the secondary staff, or if you like the middle school and senior school staff have seen the junior school staff grappling with this over the last two to three years, that there's been a level of acceptance in this environment that is not the sort of level of acceptance that you would see in a traditional, say, large city secondary school. So we, I think we've started with an advantage in that there's a huge, there has been a huge amount of goodwill. Now that goodwill at the moment I think has been ...
>
> V: Stretched to the limit.
>
> P: Stretched to the limit.

This school sees its strength as its internal professional links, which run counter to usual secondary (faculty-based) staff dynamics.

10: Attitudes of non-teacher school populations

School populations, including the parents, can be an important factor in implementation—especially the level of interest in education that is exhibited by the other interested populations. Schools with very diverse populations, or with populations where only an indifferent interest in education is shown by the students and/or parents, have particular difficulties with such an innovation. This is not yet such an issue for most schools, since implementation is still so initial. But schools which are considering the imminent production and distribution of reports, with levels, are well aware that the reception these reports receive is crucial to the acceptance of the whole initiative, and to the workload of teachers.

C: When I had programmed units of work specifically with outcomes in mind, when I did the assessment, ongoing assessment of those kids, in my assessment register with their marks listed I also had ticked whether they achieved the outcomes, and I found it was too time consuming to go back over that and use that information, so I don't think I'll bother doing that next year. I will have the outcomes there, but I was using my memory I guess that that kid was really successful and achieved those outcomes. Because it just worked, I started and it took too long to go back through the assessment and say yes, yes, no, no, record that and then get out another recording sheet.

Int: So you're assigning a level, you're just doing it basically based on the assessment that you have done, and just your ...

C: Mmm Hmm Professional judgement.

Int: Professional judgement.

C: And where I'm not sure, looking at kids' work and going back to my assessment book and saying okay well yes there are.

Int: And you're comfortable doing that?

C: Yeah, but next year when it's society and environment and I teach a hundred and forty kids, and I have to, I'm not going to be comfortable doing that. You know, that's, I'm assuming that maybe it takes me a bit less than, you know, fifteen to twenty minutes per kid, next year 10 minutes. I'm still looking at twelve hundred minutes, you know, hours and hours of work, that's just crazy. It really is.

Int: In addition to your teaching load and ...

C: Yes, and it's also the time line, it's also reports. So while assigning the level and writing the comment is the report for English, I've still got to do all my reports for the other subjects. It's on top of it as well.

P: And such a small amount of information really changed the level.

C: Yeah. That's right ... how to tell that with few words.

The closeness of school staff to their students and the parents is a related factor—the degree to which teachers are seen as part of a community to which they have an ongoing relationship. Where there is a strong sense of trust, schools feel they would be able to explain the process to parents. This factor of parent attitudes acts more positively in primary schools, where personal contact between parent and teacher is often close, than it does in secondary schools. However, the right of parents to have comprehensible reports of their child's progress is a widely held belief, and will be discussed later in the chapter, *The perceived benefits*.

In none of the school visits was a relationship of the reports with the information needs of other clients, for example, employers, mentioned. It is too early, perhaps? Or is it that the levels are seen by teachers as being a K-10 exercise? Do they think that Year 10 exit students don't use their reports when job-seeking? Earlier reports by ACER suggest that the time will come when systems and teachers are forced to consider the uses to which employers can put reports with levels, and the interpreting work this will call from them. In this case-study aspect of the project, despite questioning, no responses could be elicited from teachers on the matter.

11: The role of technology

Technology is not regarded by many teachers as being a significant factor in exploring the concepts involved in a profiles-based approach to assessment. This understanding is closely related to the implementation stage teachers and systems have reached. Where the focus of thought is still on the programming, technology can only play a minor part, but where teachers are wrestling with issues of recording and reporting levels, technology is seen as potentially playing a major part. It can save time and it can allow a range of clients easy access to the stored data. (This last is not always seen as a plus, however.)

> The problem's not only with them, but the purposes for which they're used. And, how they can be used for very good educational purposes, or for quite diabolical educational purposes.

But poor technology, or the inability of the systems to provide the required level or kind of technology for effective recording or reporting either back to the systems or to parents, is a serious, sometimes fatal, drawback to implementation.

> J: And so we're waiting for better versions. And quite frankly the support that we got from it was terrible, because we went to district meetings and there was a primary school teacher there who brought her son, who was a second year info tech person, along to help us with teaching staff.
>
> G: And we sat at computers, and could have done at our school what we were doing there really.
>
> J: Yeah, so we were wasting our time and we thought, 'We'll put this on the back burner until we get the stuff together'.
>
> Int: So there was a real desire on your behalf to get into it?
>
> G: Oh definitely, just a total lack of support from the system. Not a total lack, but I think everyone was floundering, even the supposed experts.

Insufficient or inappropriate technology is seen by teachers as a lack of commitment from the very system which is advocating implementation, and as something which will make implementation harder for them than is necessary.

This issue of insufficient or inappropriate technology is a greater problem for secondary schools than for primary schools, mainly because teachers in primary schools generally only have to prepare and record assessments, profile levels and reports for one class of students, at one year stage, though they also need to be aware of all eight of the KLAs. By comparison, secondary teachers have to prepare and assess many more students, at several year stages and at a multiplicity of profile levels, and frequently they teach from at least three or four of the KLAs.

There are logistic difficulties with access to computers in secondary schools which do not operate in primary schools, or where they do it is with less forceful repercussions than in secondary schools. These are associated with teacher absence and change, continuity between one course/unit and another, the results of individual, flexible interpretation of statements in programming and the need for reporting to be done on the one student, by many teachers, all needing access to the technology at the one time.

> G: I mean the idea is that we will find out from the primary school. It will all just come up on the screen. Okay, that's what level they're at. And we will punch in our data. See, a lot of the discussion is just on the pragmatic stuff. Like, well we can't all punch in the data so how are we going to do that? Are there to be data sheets that people fill out? Who's going to load the data? Do we employ someone? And in schools a lot of the discussion has to be on that. I think people are put off KIDMAP as a DSE thing, but I mean it's just a database. I quite like the idea of being able to extract particular groups of students at a time to see how they're going, or for perhaps evaluating whether the resources you've put into a particular area, you know, have been usefully used. That's a bit of a DSE line, that one isn't it?!
>
> M: There's going to be a need for a lot more computers around the school that teachers can use all linked to KIDMAP somehow.
>
> G: Well that's what I say, maybe people would fill them out on data sheets.
>
> M: Yeah, but I mean where are you going to get your information? You probably won't be able to get any information back off the computer ... I mean if there's a computer with KIDMAP on it in my office I would access it. If I've got to get up and walk somewhere else, and when I get there another teacher's using the computer, I'm not going to bother. I haven't got the time to.
>
> S: And some faculties are quite large. You don't have all your science staff in one science office, therefore, you know, and depending where you are located ...
>
> J: Every key learning area in the school should be getting a computer to do it.
>
> Int: In order to make it work?
>
> J: They can't expect us to do it all with second rate equipment.

Where the system has refined the technology and resourced schools with appropriate equipment, teachers can utilise it, and this facilitates the whole implementation. The timing of the availability of the technology is crucial. To expect effective implementation, systems will need to develop and provide appropriate technology before it is needed in the schools, and they will need to train teachers in its use. To adopt these strategies is in the interests of the systems, because the provision of them will substantially ease the burden on teachers, and the likelihood of the delivery of the benefits the systems are hoping for will be considerably enhanced.

> D: For the first time ever we're actually using a computer to generate everything. Our reporting format up on the screen. And we're not even ticking everything, but putting asterisks in the box, computer generated. We've caught up all the user friendly statements.
>
> P: As principal I'm not teaching any classes, but in terms of the EDSAS my understanding is that those parent friendly descriptors can actually be imported using the system. It's a matter of, you can actually load that disk up apparently.

D: Where you have loaded those parent friendly statements up and you're looking at what each of these children can do and saying yes they can do that, so down the bottom no problems we just pick up the name and go 'Kelly' and then dot point 'uses mathematics' ... whatever, and we get that, not cut and paste, we drag and drop. J's been to laptops PDs and advises putting around about two, maximum three, statements about each strand.

P: I think one of the needs that's come out of this is that staff need to start to access the computing technology, and we've got a budget submission into our finance committee for a major project to enable junior school, middle school and senior school staff to have more access. If we're successful, we'll get two stand-alone work stations and a portable laptop that people will actually be able to borrow out and take home. So, that need has certainly been borne out in terms of people's experiences.

Teachers have residual concerns about systems' use of such data, and these doubts will need to be allayed before consistent compliance can be achieved.

It is important to reiterate that the existence of all of the factors discussed in the second part of this chapter will not necessarily result in effective implementation. Without the four key factors described in the first part, the provision of these additional factors is unlikely to ensure anything. But, when combined with the four key factors, these additional factors will allow for swifter, more efficient and easier acceptance by and commitment to the process of implementation by schools. Teachers perceive the failure of most systems to provide for, or to facilitate the provision of, the additional factors as impeding implementation. This perception reduces the teachers' sense of the value of the exercise.

15 How to Implement Best Practice Strategies

This chapter is offered to teachers and systems in the best spirit of case-study methodology: which is that the participants are prepared to offer their insights and experiences as illustrative and illuminative, not definitive. It builds on the distinction, which has been made earlier in this report, between the acceptance of the value placed by teachers on the outcomes-based initiative and their criticisms of the implementation as they have experienced it. It is offered to others in the light of the previous two chapters, where a considerable quantity of data has been laid out through the transcript extracts on the earlier stages of the implementation process. In addition, these earlier stages have been more widely experienced by teachers in schools, albeit often in less than perfect form, than the later ones. There is less to be learned about the earlier stages and therefore the further reporting of teachers' insights will serve fewer ends.

The later stages of implementation, pertaining to integrating assessment into teaching, conducting the assessment, assigning levels and reporting on these, have been experienced by fewer teachers in Australia. The insights of teachers with some relevant experience were deliberately sought, with a view to sharing them.

For all these reasons, this chapter will spend a disproportionately low amount of time and space on the first three stages in the teacher's program of implementation, as listed below, in comparison with these later stages.

Best practice strategies for teachers implementing outcomes-based approaches

Overview of Stages 1 to 3

It is important to clarify that no teacher was prepared to state that the ways that had worked for them would necessarily work for other teachers, or in another place. Whilst the researchers could see that the four key factors discussed in the previous chapter needed to be present, teachers do not have that overarching view, and, as experts in learning, they know that different people learn in different ways. They were usually able to say what had worked for them. In their descriptions of their introduction to and early experiences with statements and profiles, each of the following three stages had to be negotiated:

Stage 1: *Getting your head around the jargon and the concepts*

Stage 2: *Mapping and planning the school curriculum*

Stage 3: *Planning the classroom teaching and learning*

What follows is an extended extract which graphically re-lives an effective and professional implementation (though it officially masqueraded as trialing!). This is an opportune moment in the report to establish that, for some though not all schools, the trialing experience is a beginning which, because it is seen by staff as worthwhile, is then adopted in a way that incorporates it in the life and planning of the school. One such school is featured in this extract. For them, trialing and implementation are a seamless web. The following extract refers to and reinforces much of what has previously been noted in this report. It also illustrates some characteristics of excellent trialing, and shows some of the ways in which systems, as well as teachers, can make a difference.

W: I'm the school principal. I think we got a letter through the mail from the Department, saying that they wanted to work with the so-called student outcome schools; trial schools. And I'm very much of the opinion that you should get in on the ground floor when the help is available, and they're prepared to assist you. They were offering training, they were offering teacher relief days, they were offering assistance in collaboration ... So I approached the staff and gave them those reasons why I thought we should go in, and they were happy to do so, or I believe they were happy to do so.

D: The trial initially started as a transition trial between Year 7 and Year 8, so it was, basically, they had two Year 7 teachers at a time. I was in a tandem arrangement as well at the time with M, but M wasn't actually involved in any of the meetings. She just sort of picked up what I brought back from the meetings, so we had a trial whereby we worked with another primary school, and the local high school. We basically started out trialing the space strand, going away, looking at different activities, coming back to our cell meeting so to speak, talking about things we found, how we were evaluating, levelling and all those sorts of things. So, as a result of the Year 7-8 trial then we got other teachers here involved, so it fed down to the junior area of our school.

Int: So you had the training and then you would come back and you were reporting to your tandem partner?

D: Yes, and we had a very close liaison with our maths superintendent, K. She was prepared to come to our school and spend time speaking to our junior teachers about the way they were going to pick it up and run with it as well. From my perspective, the real benefit of that trial was the interaction with other staff, particularly the high school staff, because high schools don't always value what primary schools do, and they were quite staggered at the standard of work our children were producing.

And it was beneficial to actually speak with teachers from the other primary school involved too, because we were running things by our children, and they were running activities by their children, we were swapping and comparing results and so on. So, I think it was towards the end of the twelve months our junior school came in. And then we ran in the second year of the trial. Unfortunately, the second year of the trial we didn't have the interaction with the high school, so we just decided to continue working with the outcome statements regardless of the fact that we didn't have any interaction with the high school.

Basically, the way K worked with us—and she was really wonderful to work with—she said small steps at a time. Don't become hassled about the overall umbrella. Get in and work with the statements in a small area and see how you go. So we actually chose a strand which we thought we could all be comfortable working with and initially we, on our own, would go away, select an aspect of the strand, find an activity we thought suited that particular strand, and then take the activity back to the meeting and then discuss problems we've had, things we've found with the children and so on. And from there, then we put a couple of activities, the same activities across the trial classes and came back together once again and discussed them. So we actually were working with the statements before we had a lot of the pressure of actually pigeon-holing and 'levelling' the children. K's emphasis was, 'Just become comfortable with working with them without pressure to actually level'.

B: Can I just hark back to how we got into it? I'm B. I teach in the junior school and when we picked it up, towards the end of the year, we basically spent about six months just playing with it. We had K, who was absolutely fantastic, like the others say—she said you know, 'Have a go, have a look.' We spent about six months looking at it. We'd do isolated activities. Things that we just do in our classroom, sometimes they wouldn't even fit in with anything else, and then we'd just take them back and actually sit with K and level them with her, and after we'd done that a few times our levellings were pretty accurate. So, I think the key to us at the beginning is that we had time.

No pressure. So we were confident to have a go, and then we said 'You know this maths is totally disjointed'. We wanted to bring it in together, so K said 'I'll give you time to have a go at joining it all'. We actually planned together. It's amazing the things that we got out of it, and what also was amazing was the extent to which the kids were producing work because before we were sort of keeping them back.

We went to integrating our maths totally, so none of it's boxed, and everything across the whole curriculum's integrated. You might be picking up your maths and your language, or your maths comes in your social studies or your science, and we were just hoping we would become more familiar with some of the outcomes so that it won't be such an onerous task. Now once you are familiar you can see where they all slot in ... we can cover everything, but again, having that time to actually plan together ... we were playing with it, up to integrating—and now J and I have journals, actually journals right through aren't they, and we just assess. At the moment we're assessing a level of each, an area each term, a strand each term.

Int: Do you mean just a personal journal that you're keeping, or a children's working journal?

B: No, a children's working journal. Kids do all their maths in journals. It's just a book ... a book and then we just assess them. We say okay, let's have a look at measurement, what have they done in measurement, and try a new strand each term. We feel we can cope with that, and obviously as we get down the track we'll probably do more, but I think that's a reasonable way to start.

D: In hindsight, I'd have to say the beauty of our situation was that we had the support of K, who is very level-headed and very thoroughly familiar with outcome statements, seeing where they're going and what's going on. We've had the time to sit and become comfortable with looking at these things, and probably even more so than any of those was that we were prepared as a group of staff to discuss what we were doing and make suggestions to each other and say: 'Look I've tried this. This is what works for me. Why don't you try that.' And it just makes it so much easier.

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B: Good point, actually, because at the beginning we were trying to fit things to an outcome and D said no, get your activity then work at that.

Int: So with your assessment task you're basically using what you're already doing and seeing how that fits different outcomes—rather than thinking, 'I've got to have a whole new batch of things I've got to do in the classroom'.

D: Right. Initially, because we were going to a meeting with high school teachers, with teachers from other schools, we spent a lot of time going through trying to come up with things that would be interesting for the kids and trying to tie them into other areas. I know I've said it many many times, the kids got to the stage where they said Mrs D we don't do art any more, it's all maths. Because a lot of the things I was doing in 'Space', I was actually doing as an art type activity, so it was all linking in, and it's really brought home the fact that in a lot of ways we are too number-centred. We can do all of our 'Number' by looking at the 'Measurement' and 'Space' strands and your 'Number' just comes in incidentally—and 'Working mathematically' too. Whereas I think in the past, I would do the 'Number' and I would do the 'Space' and 'Measurement'. I do believe there are probably still a lot of teachers who treat them as separate entities.

I've had teachers at other places say, 'Look, I do so many days on 'Number' and so many on something else'. It's not that they're a bad teacher but I think it's just so much easier once you start looking at the thing as a whole. And I mean I may do graphing as a maths type activity, which means again I don't necessarily have to do it as a social studies type activity. And science. There are just so many things which tie in once you really start looking at it.

It is not possible to read this extract without being impressed by the teachers, and their leaders' and the system's approach to trialing. It is significant that the leaders had confidence in the teachers' pre-existing conceptual and philosophical frameworks. It is to these frameworks the consultant urged the teachers to fit the statements and profiles, not the reverse. The three stages listed at the beginning of this chapter were all part of what the teachers and their leaders were engaging in, but in such a way that their experience and knowledge was built on rather than needing to be 'overturned'. The inter-relatedness of the planning, teaching and assessment, especially the latter, is an appropriate lead in to the next section.

Stage 4: Integrating assessment into planning for teaching and learning

This aspect of implementation is not quite the same as *Planning the classroom teaching and learning* (the third stage listed earlier in this chapter), though if teachers can see the importance of assessment in the former, they are generally able to see the importance of *Integrating assessment into planning for teaching and learning*. When the consultant in the previous extract exhorted teachers to decide on 'an activity' and then match it to an outcome, she was suggesting that assessment is an integral part of planning and teaching an activity. Sometimes known as 'authentic assessment', what is meant by this is no more than that the assessment, in order to retain its integrity and to illustrate what student learning has occurred, must derive from the learning context.

P: We have slowed things down a lot and spend a lot more time on the task that we set and do a lot of teaching and re-teaching, spending time concentrating on the process that kids go through to get to the final task, whereas before it would be you've got two weeks to do this assignment, this is what is expected of you, do it. So now it's, you know, we'll spend blocks of time on it, six or seven weeks sometimes on one task, and the task is a lot bigger and there's a lot more pieces to it, but there's a lot more time spent with the kids working through how they can produce their best piece of work.

A: And I think the emphasis in what P is saying too is that the emphasis is no longer on the end task ... The shift has moved through to looking at the process. Whereas the old curriculum that we've been using, and the task unit curriculum is very linear in its structure, we're actually looking now at bringing our own curriculum, using the elements of unit curriculum in many cases, but making that notion of the spiral curriculum when you actually do have the chance to go back and re-teach, and revisit things to excel—understandings, also, so, that's a very different way of looking at things.

The teacher below wanted to share his particular error of thinking, so others would not repeat it!

> Oh we made a horrendous mistake, because we hadn't done anything with them at all. L and myself sat down and said, 'Right, we have to test these kids—as they come into each year we need to test them, and give them a level, so we know where to start from. So we went out and we wrote this horrendous disgusting test that we were going to give to every kid in the school. Yeah, pen and paper test. And I think we ended up giving it to three classes, and by the time we'd marked four or five papers we were tearing them up, we found that it was a complete waste of time. It took us two days to write the instrument, and about five minutes to wreck it. It was a waste of time.

Outcomes-based learning is more readily able to render 'authentic assessment' (not a phrase used by any teacher we interviewed) than most other assessment regimes. This is because it explicitly links outcomes, which are the focus of the assessment, to what students can do, and this can incorporate much else, including what they know.

H: So, the way I found was easiest for me is I'd put out an activity and then I'd look at the children's work and then I'd actually sort of sort them into broad piles of ability levels and then I would actually go to the particular outcome statement I was looking at and the pointers, and from that I would then look at the children's work and say, 'Well no, this isn't a Level 3 because it doesn't have this. This is a Level 3 because it has these things. This is a Level 4 because it appears it has those things.' And at times it wasn't so much the work the children produced, it was talking to them and looking at them while they were doing it. For instance, with one construction piece a girl came to me, and it was a truncated cube she was making, and she said 'mine didn't work'. And I said, 'Well why didn't it work?' She said 'Well, I didn't put tabs on it, and also I didn't construct an equilateral triangle, so because I didn't construct the equilateral triangle it didn't fit properly.' So she knew what she'd done wrong, so even though her end result didn't show a Level 4 or whatever it was, she was a Level 4 because she had the process.

Int: So it's really moved you to looking at the process of what the student is learning and doing.

When teachers know they can anticipate finding a range of levels in the one class, they are more inclined to design their assessment tasks in such a way as to facilitate the range of learners.

M: Charlie Albert, who, you may know, wrote an article called *Why I like the National Maths Profiles* ... and the sense of what he said was that, rather than being tied down to assessing where each kid is at, according to the profiles, why not turn them around the other way and use them to inform your planning to create opportunities for kids to demonstrate working mathematically in each of these different areas? And that's really where I've been trying to use them. To try to use them to create opportunities for kids, so that I give what I think is a rich task to kids, but then, you know, I go back to the profiles occasionally and think well how could I sort of beat this up or how could I crank it down to give this sector of my class or that sector of my class opportunities to demonstrate where they're at.

Int: So using the profiles the way you've just described offers different opportunities to learn.

M: And different exit points so that you can extend it or kids can still exit from it.

Int: Yes, and feel comfortable.

M: And they've learnt something that is relevant to them in their context, but which at the same time offers scope for say the more able kids or more inclined or kids who have a particular interest.

•••••

... you've got your what we call an 'open-ended task' that you structured such that the very able students who can work at Level 7 or 8 can demonstrate skills at that level and do some wonderful work, and yet the child that's working at Level 3 or 4 is still getting a lot of benefit from working at that particular task.

When teaching students includes describing to them in plain language what the intended outcomes are at the outset of the unit or activity, and perhaps also what the assessment tasks and their criteria are, the transparency of the process is such that authentic assessment almost must follow. Certainly, students will quickly question and debate, if they think it has not followed. (So, eventually, might parents!)

P: And especially with oral work, I found a lot of the kids are more likely to contribute to class discussions because we've said to them, every time you speak you're affecting the way I interpret your speaking and listening, and so if you participate a lot and answer lots of questions and have something to say, then you're probably showing me a higher level of speaking and listening and giving me something that I can put towards your report, rather than just 'you're going to do a talk today. It's going to be three minutes, off you go'.

A: That context is really quite important, because, yeah, students can do very well in final class and others can do very poorly, whereas in a different environment for a different purpose, they definitely show different skills and different competencies.

Towards best practice in assessment and reporting

Conducting assessment

When the assessment is integrated into the teaching and learning, conducting the assessment may be invisible or appear incidental (to all but the teacher), or automatic (where it is the product that has been created during the learning), or it may be a more traditionally discrete activity.

> Int: ... so you've rejigged a number of assessment tasks that you were doing?
>
> M: Yeah, well that's a never ending task because ... the assessment has to be driven by what we want to measure in terms of outcome. The sorts of tasks that we've tried to write for ourselves are those that we can directly determine whether the kids have achieved particular outcomes or not. One thing that we haven't looked at (in Maths) and which is a bit thin on the ground are the open-ended tasks. They are very difficult to write and there's not a huge number of them around for us to use to measure particular outcomes so we've concentrated mainly on skills-orientated tasks, pen and paper tasks.

Integral to conducting assessment is the negotiation of the assessment 'result' with the student, whose learning, after all, the whole exercise is intended to demonstrate. Teachers report that this is very much more inclined to occur in an outcomes-based approach.

> Something that I've started doing is running these little journals which are only a third of a book and I ask them questions like, 'What was the point of this activity and why did I choose to have you do this activity in pairs rather than individually', and you know, I've learnt more from doing that activity every day than I have from any text of an assignment that I've given kids. It allows me to really zoom in on their awarenesses of what's going on. And not just mathematics, but processes and confidence and leadership, and things like that. And I think asking the right sort of questions. That's something I'm actually thinking about a lot these days, is learning how to ask the right questions.

Deciding on levels

Comment has previously been made in this report on how teachers can approach the weighty matter of making decisions about levels. The most commonly uttered cluster of thoughts is that trusting one's professional judgement, and sharing that with other colleagues who can then confirm or discuss it with you, is the only way to go.

> J, the character I'm working with did quite a bit of PD last year on the statements and profiles, so he's been very good for me, talked me through it. We've actually gone just to the different strands and the indicator ones where we've done all the different ones the kids can do, and then we picked what we thought would be an easy student to assign levels to, and worked out 'Yes, they can do all of these', and assigned the levels, and then picked two or three different students we thought were from different areas in the class and assigned levels to those—and then we looked at the user friendly statements, or parent friendly statements or whatever they are and said 'Yeah, the kids can do this.' And then we sort of almost started grouping kids, you know, like in Year 9 there are some students I think we can only put on three strands there, they were five, five, five, and we looked at the mark books and we thought 'Well, these students have all been given similar marks, can they do these same things?' We decided, 'Yes they can', so then we started grouping three or four kids we thought would be four and fives, and then another group may not have gone quite as far. I'm not certain whether that's a legitimate way of doing it. K, our ex coordinator said that's fine. She was doing it that way apparently. So we've gone through and done all our thirty odd that way.

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> Well, in our reporting, for instance, and it's changing, we're thinking of doing something different again, but if we wanted to measure outcomes, you know, it's very easy to have a look at the outcomes and have a file in front of you and have samples of kids' work, even their work books—collect them up, and it doesn't take that long to create an impression of where the kids are at in terms of the level. Are they more this level than they are that or that? And I think that those sorts of judgements can easily be made providing that the tasks that you get the kids to do are relatively focused. And that's why too, I think the questioning, when you're in the classroom, the sorts of questions that you ask have to be relatively focused. I mean well focused so that you know what you're getting out of the kids.

These teachers can cope with the notion that a level is given to a student for a task which is indicative of an outcome. It is a snapshot, it is a view on a profile, it is not a whole picture. There are concerns however:

> When you consider that this is, as people keep telling us, this A4 sheet, this is the snap shot at the bottom. The concern I have is how much time we're putting into the snapshot. And that's for everything.

The whole picture comes, of course, with all the levels on all the KLAs being profiled. This assertion hides a number of issues, for example, it is dependent upon the levels being conceptually and developmentally valid, and upon the levelness of outcomes being comparable across different KLAs. Teachers who have been dealing with statements and profiles for some time know of these problems.

> At the moment, for example, there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that what is Level 2 in mathematics is Level 2 in studies of society, or remotely approximately ... in English. Let alone in any of the others. So that to say, to make a judgement a child is at Level 2 in science, doesn't say that they are at a particular cognitive level, necessarily, and not everybody even agrees about what Level 2 means. So that if you, then, at a district or state level say that we have all these children ... in Year 8 for example at Level 2, it doesn't actually mean anything, and if performance management and things like that start up ... the implications are absolutely horrendous.

The strategies of sharing and discussing with colleagues teaching similar material, described in the extract on the previous page, are not always available to teachers. This is especially the case in secondary schools, where alternative strategies must be adopted.

> M: ... my effectiveness is kind of minimal at the moment, because I feel I'm really running around like a headless chook at times. It's difficult, see I'm wearing an historical cap but working in a different way because we've now got a cross curriculum team and-well, first of all I don't have the credibility out of my curriculum area, but then I feel, I mean I know bugger all about literacy and I'm again doing a lot of thinking about that. But they're actually issues that all of us can take on, because creating opportunities for multiple exit points within any activity is something you could generalise, to a Science activity or Soc. Ed. or English. But on top of all that, we're trying to explore ways of integrating our curriculum, or strengthening those cross curriculum links. Now we've deliberately done that ...
>
> Int: This is in your sub-schools?
>
> M: Yes. We've done that in a structural way, by making teachers teach only maths and science or only English and Soc. Ed. to ... a given group of kids, who only

> have two teachers for their main core subjects. So the potential is there, the infrastructure is there now for teachers to integrate fully if they wanted to and if they have the confidence and skills. But most of us are still running two discrete units for subjects. But I, quite deliberately, the kids don't know whether they're going to do Maths or Science. I mean we're doing a unit on bikes at the moment which is just crawling with Mathematics, but they think it's Science. I don't care.

Trialing has been such a divorced experience for some teachers precisely because the assessment is not closely related to the curriculum. It is rendered impossible when the concepts are not incorporated in the 'teaching and learning plan', when they are not part of the 'head knowledge' which teachers carry around with them.

> C: ... you need to plan forwards, not backwards, you don't find an assessment task to fit something that you've taught after you've taught it and try to match it to the profiles then. You should be finding assessment tasks that fit your outcome before you actually start teaching. Little things like that ...
>
> Int: So the assessment task is part of the learning experience?
>
> C: That's right, yeah, and the evaluation process, the whole spiral.

In the face of a task as arbitrary as deciding a level for an assessment task which has not been integral to the teaching and learning planning, but is connected to some outcome, teachers have experienced a serious case of self-doubt, and have become frustrated. The teachers in the following extract, although supported and working in a system which has long ago adopted an outcomes-based approach to education, experienced the disadvantages of trialing statements and profiles as a disembodied experience.

> Y: We knew we had to profile a certain number of students, and initially we were encouraged to do the whole class, which was ...
>
> C: We just said no. But originally we were supposed to do the whole class!
>
> Y: In every single strand. So we just said no, we're going to focus on a certain number of students. We selected our students and hoped they didn't leave, because a couple of people selected students, started profiling and then they left.
>
> Int: How many did you select?
>
> Y: I think we chose somewhere between four and eight didn't we? And tried to have a range. But they also had to be ones that you knew had done enough work to be able to ...
>
> Int: How did the kids react to that?
>
> Y: I don't think they knew.
>
> C: They weren't involved at all.
>
> Int: Oh.
>
> C: They weren't involved. I think I might have mentioned to my class that I was profiling ...
>
> Int: The comments you wrote about them ... you didn't write on their work?

C: No.

Y: We photocopied their work and it had things underlined, or highlighted with arrows going here, there and everywhere.

Int: So, my question about did they learn differently, or did they get engaged in this, or didn't that happen? Would you think there are advantages to them being engaged? Do you think they would, would they learn differently if they actually started to be, I don't know, more aware of the outcomes approach?

Y: We had outcomes anyway. We have outcomes for them to meet, and there were some, I don't know if that's any different. We're still meeting outcomes.

C: I mean I had one student ... but when you're dealing with, you know, sort of six to eight students from a class, you can't really start

S: That becomes a bit of an issue, doesn't it. The rest of the class, that is.

C: Yes. So that's why we didn't really involve the kids.

Y: And I think for most of us, we weren't really sure what we were doing, and I certainly wouldn't know how to explain it to anybody else, let alone twelve and thirteen year olds.

These teachers have decided that the fault lies with the lack of congruence of the outcomes with the curriculum, but the problem is more deep seated than that. Deciding on levels incorporates notions of depth of learning. Outcomes can be described as an approach which enables teachers to indicate this depth of learning. Some teachers and systems have instituted stages within a level when assessing students, to assist in indicating 'levelness' ... 'beginning to' to 'doing with difficulty' to 'comfortably doing'. There are a number of variations to this strategy, and they appear to make teachers more relaxed about the whole task of assessment.

C: And remember ... when we sort of came to terms with the 'emerging, consolidating, achieving' was it? Are those the three? Yeah. But that actually was quite liberating then, to think, yeah, it's emerging, because some of the kids that were linguistically weak, they didn't seem to fit. But they were certainly not, we got down as low as ...

Y: Three and four for some.

C: Yeah, I thought no, they're not that weak, and then we suddenly said, well, hang on if we look at it as 'emerging', yes, then that fits. So I think we began by looking at what they had achieved, and that freed us a lot. And that only came out through talking.

The issue of moving students from the ESL profile to the English profile is a thorny one, which cannot be fully explored here. But a number of teachers with a significant number of students who are on a level on the ESL scale which is lower than one would hope (or lower than their level on their other profiles) are able to register real student progress using this scale. Then they can 'slide' the student over to the other scale, by matching the outcomes. The systems would do well to encourage teachers in this skill and strategy, and provide some contact between teachers for whom this is a useful approach. The following extract refers to distance educators of Aboriginal community students, but the issue is one which any teacher of ESL students will need to address.

E: I found the profiling just gave me that little bit of extra—that I would actually say, look according to this the student is still working at B2 on ESL scales and at Year 8 they should really be 3 or 4 so we have got to do some intensive work if the student is to succeed ...

Int: So you could use the profile as a means of identifying and then providing specific additional work.

E: Yes. But we also found the profiles on their own just didn't fit our students. We had to use the ESL scale as well as the English and try to interweave them. *(Inservices were provided.)* It was mainly to see how we could use ESL scales and it was only that some of us asked how we could tie them in with the profiles and how they corresponded to the profiles that the profiles were actually brought into it. The link was made.

Int: So that is a practitioners' link isn't it?

E: Yes.

J: A comment I made the other day which you might like to elaborate on is that we found here that the ESL scales with their strategies section actually gave us a more dense field for working within, in terms of deciding on the methodology for many of our students.

Int: And these are the national ESL scales aren't they.

J: Yes.

E: Yes, we found ... working with both of them and trying to use both, was basic, both in our reporting and in trying to assist students to improve in certain areas.

Recording assessment

The recording of assessments is a task which is closely related to the reporting of them. You are only able to report what has been recorded. Thus the later life or use of assessments is embedded in the collection and recording of assessments. Teachers are conscious of these possible future uses when they start to collect and record assessments. It is not a matter of recording being 'teacher business' and reporting being 'school and system business'. How these issues of multiple use, ownership and purposes are to be resolved is not yet clear. No school that we visited had solved this cluster of issues. Only a very few schools and teachers had attempted a foray into this tangled territory. At the time of our visits, South Australia was the only system which had offered anything substantive in the way of models.[1]

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[1] Several booklets with models for reporting, as mentioned by Howes in his chapter in this book, were provided to Victorian schools late in term 3 of 1996.

The researchers, having listened to teachers who are as advanced in their implementation as any in the country, are convinced these models are likely to be vital to the success of the whole initiative in schools. Systems could do some of this work, so that teachers are not trying to work outside their competence, using time they need for pedagogic reflection associated with implementation. One can only admire schools which show the level of initiative of that in the following extract, but they should not be having to deflect funds and energies in this way.

W: That's one of the things I'd like to do next is to get say somebody's Maths journal and removing myself with the language outcome statements, and go through that and see what I can come up with ... the language outcome statements. I don't think it's fair to ask the staff to do that because they've got enough to do with the teaching as well, so if I could do that then I could make some correlations. But what we really want, and D and I talked about this, is somebody to come up with a package and these two ladies have very good computer husbands, to come up with a package where if, when the teachers say, you know the class lists, and they say okay, this kid can do 2.5 in mathematics. Somehow or other they take that into the computer. Somehow or other the computer's going to link it up and cover all those other activities and other areas that they can do in all the subject areas. And they print it out, it's all printed out. I don't have the knowledge to do that, so we're rather hoping that S and B might. We don't have enough money to do that, you see, so we need to get, we need somehow or other to get a grant from someone to pay these two men to do it, if they would be prepared to do it, if they felt they had the expertise. But somebody's got to do that.

J: They definitely have the expertise to do it.

Int: Have you looked at any other computer, any other packages that are available?

W: None that we see, or know of at the moment.

J: I don't think it has been done though.

W: I don't think it has been done.

Int: I don't know that that linking has been done. I know there are packages that are based on profiles.

J: That would be brilliant.

D: Certainly the linking is something which, whether it's a state thing, but I believe with outcome statements we're going to have to have a lot more resources which are outcome statement based, and a lot more of the linking type documents. We actually have a linking document in maths which links with our actual maths syllabus, so I believe maths is progressing very well, and I hope then the other areas are going to move along. I mean now maths is actually looking at some of their statements they're re-writing. From experience, they've found the language isn't appropriate, so I just hope the other areas will be as progressive as the maths has been. I think we've been very lucky that that's the one we've actually picked up on first.

J: I think your point though, W, is the key to it all. I think the cross linking, you know ...

Int: Well then it becomes manageable, doesn't it?

W: It does, yes, yes.

D: Because it is a massive task across eight areas ...

Another aspect of the recording of assessment which concerns teachers is the amount of recording expected. This concern introduces a new note into this report: that of teacher perception of the power of the systems, outside the classroom and school, but impinging on the teaching and learning process in intrusive ways. Thus teachers are asking, how much do I need to have, in my markbook or in the portfolio, to prove a level? Is the anecdotal, the 'gut response', no longer valued or useful? How can I take a holistic view of my student if I am bound by assessment I have formally run and recorded? How can outcomes across KLAs be recorded? Once or more often? If so, why? Some schools are able to assert a policy and teachers cease to worry about the demands.

> Well ... see, the only thing that we really need to record in, well as far as I'm concerned, at a school level, is what level the kids have achieved, maybe at the end of each year. Where they're at, in each strand, so, at a school level that's about all that's needed. At a system level that's probably all that's needed as well. Across the system, how many kids do we have achieving Level 4 in .... At a department level, though, and as far as parents are concerned, we see that there is a need for them to get more information. So there's the way in which we can record for the system, which allows us to record relatively easily on computer in a database the levels that kids achieve. Even though that software is not on our system at the moment, it could be. That part of it is sort of down the track a bit. What we've done is produced a report over the past two years that is, that we believe gives a lot more information to the parents about where kids are at with their Mathematics, and we've also attempted at the same time to level the kids, although we now recognise that it's almost impossible to level a kid by term, that it takes a whole year.

But most are floundering and system direction is being cried out for, by teachers. Models are the answer to teachers' needs at this stage of the debate, not to be slavishly followed, but to help structure the debate and crystallise ways in which goals can be achieved through documentation.

Int: Yes. Are you going to design a report sheet?

P: We should say on reporting that our other assistant principal, F, did some parent surveys at the end of last year, and basically, on our current reporting format, I think they were pretty positive, the responses.

All: They were, yeah.

G: So one of the things in designing a new report form to take on board all the stuff we've been talking about is not to lose the good things we've been doing which is contained in a reasonably substantial descriptive report based around work requirements, letter grades for achievement, and indication about effort and conduct. But one of the things that we're thinking about is moving to an A4 size. A lot of other schools seem to be doing that, and F has actually prepared a paper and got some examples from other schools for our group to look at. We're not rushing into it. By about November we hope to have a policy which will have been to staff and will be ready to go to school council, which will incorporate things like what the report format looks like. Something about learning

> outcomes will be included and so on. But there's been examples from the DSE around where they've had, you know, strands on the reports and bars indicating where the student is. They're saying don't report learning outcomes. They're saying report where the student is at a strand. Now, we haven't discussed that yet.
>
> J: It has to be parent friendly too. That's when I think, you know, reporting in strands would be a nightmare.

Reporting levels should be easier in schools where the teachers are accustomed to reporting outcomes.

Reporting on student learning

The explicitness of the outcomes approach is, at this final stage, revealed at its greatest mechanical complexity, as the previous extract has shown. And, once again, it is teachers in schools who will need to engage in these processes and develop strategies for coping with the breadth of the task. The first issue here is 'Reporting for whom?' To answer this question takes one back to considerations referred to in the previous chapter. There are several clients to be considered, and each one will require a different reporting mechanism. Different mechanisms are needed because stakeholders have different goals and different levels of understanding.

> What we've actually done, and this is because of the risks of the comments we're getting, and we don't want to go back to a report system but we're trying to come up with something that will satisfy parents, is a combination ... it's a combination of fact plus a very specific tick the box where your child is at. Okay, so, in maths, in achievement and effort, maths knowledge and understanding is either excellent, good, satisfactory or needs improvement, or improvement needed. And the same with effort. So it's really—you know the kids well enough to be able to go through that and check that off, and it's not derogatory, it's not saying you're failing or anything like that. It's just saying you need to improve in this or you need to improve in that, so it's in maths and language, and then personal qualities, attitudes to learning, organisation and ... courtesy
>
> So that was what we're using for the 6–7s this term, mainly in response to what the parents are asking for.

They make different meanings from the data to which teachers have access. But the teachers will need to mediate that data for the different audiences. Teachers also have a sense of responsibility regarding the uses and meanings clients may ascribe to the reporting which the teachers have provided.

> H: I wouldn't contemplate using them for reporting, except in a competency framework ... I think the idea of using them as a reporting tool for content is simply ludicrous, and I would not under any circumstances recommend them as a reporting tool for any of the content subjects
>
> Int: So are you saying something more like a Mayer key competency, something like that, and perhaps, well surely they can build ... across my subject areas or any subject areas anyway?
>
> H: Well that makes sense. If you must have standards, if you must have a comparative basis that you can use from school to school and district to district

> or however, then you must, you must stay within the skills-based competencies like that, and even some of the Mayer ones that are more effective, like working in groups, and things like that, they are very difficult to live with, because it depends on the perception of the leveller as well as the state of the intestines of the people who are working in the group that day. But I think you can generally test somebody's level of literacy. You can generally look at a whole lot of work they've done and say yes there are these levels of literacy, and I think you can generally test levels of numeracy, but I have very little faith in levels for almost anything else.

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Reporting to students

Teachers have no difficulty appreciating the range of stakeholders which exists, but they wish to ensure that students are seen as the first ranked client of the reporting process. It is often forgotten that doing the assessment task and receiving a level of attainment will not, of themselves, mean students have an understanding of their learning. Accurate and meaningful reporting is a crucial stage in the teaching and learning process. Teachers report that they are able to use the explicitness of the outcomes approach to take a pro-active approach to reporting to their students, and, via the self reporting undertaken by students have the students engage in an exchange about learning, with each other, their teachers, and even with their parents.

> M: One thing that worked for me was to actually hand the kids the outcome statements with the pointers and get them to make judgements for themselves about the sorts of things they reckon that they could do. And then line that up against what I thought that they could do and it was interesting that there weren't a lot of mismatches (in the assessments). The kids actually thought that they were better than they were on the whole, but they were not far off the mark. Some of the jargon we had to explain and say well this is what this means. Do you think you can do that? Just to see if I had been making the right judgements myself, and that was done at the end of each term ... I did it initially because I was just a bit worried about whether or not my judgements were right. But some and specifically for those kids who are not obvious in the class, you tend not to visit them as much or whatever, so I wanted to see whether or not I was making the right judgements about that specific group of kids, and I think we were, basically. But when you show the kids the sorts of things that we want them to be able to do, and what they should be able to do next, they're motivated to learn.
>
> G: But again all that's time consuming, to get it all together and to get it into stuff that the kids can actually read, tick the box sort of thing and all that. The kids like it, but it's a lot of work.
>
> M: It's changed practical teaching styles a fair bit!

Not everyone is convinced of the impact of these approaches on students:

> Y: They don't learn anything they don't want to do.
>
> C: I don't think they do.
>
> Int: So when kids get engaged with, what is there, I mean your example a moment ago of the kid who you were able to say to 'look this is what you are doing well,

and these are the things that still aren't right', doesn't that mean it's easier for him to learn?

C: It doesn't make any difference.

Int: Okay.

Y: Well you'd hope, the teacher would always, if they're going to make comments, say these are the things you are doing well. You have done this well, you've clearly understood this, you've demonstrated that, you've examined this, ra, ra, ra, ra, and then say, however or but or what you need to consider or what you need to think carefully about or focus on for the next time is. I mean you'd hope that they'd always pick up this is what you're doing really well,

Int: Well when they re-write something, they must identify what it is that they need to improve the next draft?

C: I believe that might ...

Int: No?

Y: Sometimes.

More discussion of these issues, as they relate to learning, is presented in the next chapter.

Reporting to other teachers (within and between schools)

Teachers regard reporting for other teachers, within the school or in another school (usually one subsequently attended by the student), as an important aspect of contributing to a student's learning, and possibly contributing to another teacher's teaching. The great bonus to be derived from statements and profiles is the consistency of application of agreed standards, across the nation, or at the very least, across classes in the one school.

Teachers' reporting on students' learnings can be very helpful to other teachers, time spent in a new diagnosis of a student's needs and levels being rendered unnecessary. It may be that the new teacher can use another teacher's reporting to plan an activity, or even a term's work for a class, on the basis of a group of reports from teachers who had students in the previous year. Teachers who are well advanced in the implementation process state they would be prepared to use levels-based reports in these ways, such is their degree of confidence in them.

P: You can choose not to look at the file straight away.

A: Exactly. But the files are there to support what we've done, and also if they've been doing better and how they're now doing. If I've not recognised that they're at that level, well let's have a look why, why aren't I?

P: And you can pick it up early, rather than waiting until the parents say my child did much better last year.

C: And the kids love looking at the work. We take the files in the classroom and they just pore through them.

P: Oh I forgot about that.

C: Yeah they love it.

Some schools have had bad experiences—of carefully profiled reports being misused by the schools which received them.

> I've actually heard secondaries say 'this is of no interest to us'. And I sent some to one of our reception secondary schools. And when I later asked them what happened to them, they said 'well we didn't know what to do with them, so we gave them back to the kids.' Which is just total breach of confidentiality and trust. So we didn't ever send any more on.

As a result of their experience of the attitude high schools have towards the reports from primary schools, these teachers show little concern on the subject of how much it may matter if they get the levels 'wrong'. These kinds of attitudes run counter to the positive approach required for the effective profiling of students over their school life. They are a concern, especially as they were most commonly reported in South Australia, the state most advanced in these matters, and thus the state with the first experience of profiled reports.

K: I don't think it matters. Because the parents don't really know what it means. And the high schools say well we'll just add another level to what you've said anyhow.

M: Or take a level away, because they don't believe it.

The productive use of another teacher's reports is generally a new possibility for most teachers. At present there is little enthusiasm for any reporting process as an assistance to a teacher wanting to lock into another teacher's view of a student's knowledge or skill level.

Int: Do the teachers use the reports? Say, does the Year 3 teacher use the one from Year 2? Do you find your staff are finding it useful?

S: Well these are all passed up to us.

Int: Do you use them and are they useful?

S: Well, at the beginning of the year it's not much point in me pulling out this child's report, because I don't know him yet, but then when, before a parent/teacher interview and I've been teaching him for a couple of months, I then, oh yes this sounds like that boy to me, and I'll check that and if I think he's mastered more. I can give you more, but to pull this out cold, it means nothing to me. And to go through 17 of them, no way. We have some other little report things that come up from the year before and I often flick through those in the first week of school and then I go back to them a month later because I've built up some sort of relationship with the class and the children, and they then mean something to me, but, unless it's a very weak or very strong child. But the overview, you don't need it to know the children.

Some are unconvinced by the claims made of the advantage to students of profiled reports.

> You know, and that's how, in a lot of ways it was said to be a fabulous thing because you could report on a common scale and all this sort of stuff. And I think for the defence families that move around there is some value in it, but is that five per cent of the population, and the rest of us are being expected to use something that is of no use to us.

It is, of course, the consistency of application of levels which enables the reports to be meaningful to others. (This assumes consistency of application, the difficulty of which is discussed elsewhere in this report.)

> They're not workable because they confuse the idea of developing a concept through various levels of understanding with bringing in content which was traditionally taught at different levels, so that for example, genetics was brought in at level 6, and it just happened to be because genetics was always taught in level 10. There was no better reason for putting genetics in than it happened to be traditionally taught in Year 10 ... so there was a great deal of confusion in the way that they were formulated.

Reporting to parents

Teachers and schools anticipate a huge task awaits them in the 'educating' of parents on statements and profiles. In the same way as teachers have had to come to terms with a new, sometimes threatening and continually exhausting process, they now have to explain the changes to a less attuned audience.

> A: The levels don't equate to grades, and they don't equate to year of study or to age of students, and there's that whole notion of parents saying well, where should my child be? There is no definitive answer to that because every individual will work at their own pace and develop at their own pace, but just because certain 15 year olds are working at a particular level doesn't mean to say that one child is better or worse because they are or aren't working at the same level, and it's a whole new notion of being able to explain to students and to parents that what your child is doing is here, this is what they are demonstrating. Okay, let's see what we can do to help them demonstrate it more.
>
> Int: So you're focusing on the individual growth and not the comparison?
>
> A: I think it's important to move away from the comparison because that really is what is destroying their education in a way because kids are being expected to do things because other people are doing them, rather than the fact that they have their own skills and strengths in the particular areas. It's the individual need that we need to focus on.

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> R: If you sit down and you really ask what do parents really want to know, and address that ...
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> G: They just want to know whether their child behaved in the classroom or not.
>
> J: That they behaved, are they doing the work.
>
> G: That's it.
>
> R: I mean we—and that's the whole thing about this reporting and the last inservice I went to—we did have a speaker there who, I thought, got to the real gist of it. He said, 'Now how much do you report', and he talked about, what was it dot size or something, and it depends, you know, you don't have to report in detail to parents. They aren't interested in whether their student can spell five letter

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> words. That's just too detailed, for us it might be useful, or for the next teacher, but if you're reporting to parents it should just be an overall picture that gives them and the kids an idea.
>
> R: Do you report strands, and how do you intermix it? Well that's the next thing. We have to discuss that. That's part of it ... the parents have no hope. I mean we were involved in this jargon and whole concept all the time and people can't understand them. There's no point if ... the parents can't use it. It's silly, I think it's tragic in fact.

Reporting to parents in levels is something few schools had done at the time of our visits, because no school has really implemented the whole approach yet. Some had actually tried to devise report forms to go home to parents (see Appendix 1 for some examples) but all of them were regarded as in a trialing mode, so late in 1996 they did not constitute a resolved documentation. Success at this point in the process will probably rely to a great extent on the quality of faith the parent population already has in its school. (This point was discussed in Chapter 14, under the heading 'Attitudes of non-teacher school populations'.)

> C: And I know, just the comments that I've written for all my society and environment (non-profiled) reports around the kids' progress, where they've been successful, what they need to work on, ra, ra, are, would be a lot more useful to parents than the (profiled) comments I'm writing that says that they can use question techniques to gather information. You know, to a parent, I think that they're not used to hearing the profile stuff and it doesn't mean as much.
>
> K: Even though there's been lots of parent information sessions and newsletter information to them and coming to this night and all that sort of thing, the parents are still going to want to hear the same information.
>
> C: What will happen is parents will request an interview, not to clarify the level, but to hear the stuff, like what's the kid actually doing in the classroom. And that's just going to be so time consuming.

Parents are seen as wanting to know about their child's progress, a legitimate concern, and one which some believe cannot be met by profiles.

> ... but I still feel that what the parents push to know ... it's human nature they want to know, if their child is in that class there, they want to know roughly whereabouts in that class. It doesn't matter if that class is way down there and ... across state comparison like that, they want to know how they're doing compared to the next door neighbours' son, and they also want to know whether he's got learning problems or whether he's, you know, terrifically advanced for his age, and a budding genius, they want to know, roughly, that sort of information.

Some report they have found the profiled reports irrelevant to their parent populations.

> V: One of the things that, last year, we actually sent out a number of brochures that (the system) had brought in about the profiles, and I didn't get one phone call.
>
> Int: To inform teachers about the ...
>
> V: Profilings and what the levels were. I never got one phone call to ask me about it.

Int: And that's unusual? You thought you might get some?

V: For sure. Our parents ring us all the time.

S: Some feedback ...

V: And maybe some inquiries, you know, what does this mean to my child?

Int: Does it mean that the documentation was unintelligible?

V: It had no information that was important to parents.

S: Yeah, not relevant.

Int: Well, particularly if you're already writing unit descriptions with outcome descriptions and judgements. I mean in a sense they're not going to need ...

D: But a lot of parents have also made a decision, look my child's going to be at this high school for the next five years. So whether they're doing the profiles or whether they're doing A, B, C, I'd rather have them A, B, C because then I know what I've actually got. A profile is insignificant unless my child moves, and they move down south. So, why do I need this information? I don't want it.

The problem of there being so apparently little movement by the child, over time, (which may be represented by a year on the same level for example) can be addressed by educating parents and by reporting over a wide range of activities and KLAs. There is hope expressed that parents will recognise 'ground covered' as a meaningful contribution to their knowledge of their child's schooling and progress.

C: And the kids find it depressing if they're stuck in a level for any length of time.

Int: Which they're going to be ...

C: And you've got to try and show some sort of movement, so we actually have tried to put the idea of 'early', 'transitional' and 'consolidating', but it's still not always enough, is it?

Computer-generated reports

What parents make of computer-generated comments, even when profile-based, is not yet known, though their reactions are thought to be predictable, as later extracts suggest.

C: Well I've put in mine on computers and then cutting and pasting ... but we're using the plain English descriptors reporting to parents, and using the comment.

K: The comments are handwritten in my case. I've done a hundred and twelve.

C: ... whereas, when I had, in my English class I had four kids who all achieved Level 4 in exactly the same strands, so I used this information, picked out the things that were most relevant and all of those kids have exactly the same comments.

Portfolios of student work

The use of a portfolio, as an ongoing process of reporting to parents, can be an antidote to parents' concerns on those matters:

Int: Now what are you looking at, what is this?

K: This is a ROLF (record of learning folder).

Int: And this ROLF folder is yours?

K: This one is mine, but these are the children's. Now that's the end of term review, I think it's term 2, and this is upper primary, yep, and, fairly detailed, but involved a lot of students at self assessment.

Int: Now that's automatic in this place?

K: Yes. And then the teacher comment down here. What we tend to do is use it for each term's review. We tend to focus on particular areas and we've learnt by experience not to have too much detail in first term, you know, it's more a reflection on what they've enjoyed and, what their goals are, and things like that. By second term we tend to try and have something a bit more specific and have a bit more meat in it.

Int: And these are all for parents. These go home?

K: Yes, that goes into the folder. At the end of term, what we've got to be careful of though is falling into the trap of also doing a report. And that's what we, and I'll show you what we've actually come up with this time to—okay that was one that we've used quite a bit.

Int: This is actually mostly filled out by the students.

K: Mostly filled out by the students and you write a paragraph yourself.

Int: And would they only do one of these in term 2, and so the classroom teacher chooses in a sense the topics that are going to be the focus of this review?

K: We plan it in year level meetings, so we decide as a group what the format is.

Int: If it's formatted like this, one of the really big problems that everybody talks about is how to get the balance between making, if you like, a report or review form, which is individual enough both to the student and the teacher, but generic enough to be able to put on some kind of a formatted arrangement so you don't have to write 50 pages. And, to some extent this has achieved that hasn't it? There's a balance there. Are teachers and parents happy with this?

K: Generally, I mean it still puts pressure on you. We have the usual type of hiccups ... When you do the task (that is have students fill out their ROLF review) with the students, you need to have everyone there, and you need to actually run them through it and discuss it so you get the best possible comment from the child, I mean otherwise they just put one word answers which is totally useless.

Int: If they're going to show it to their parents, does that make a difference?

K: Yes ... I tend to sort of give them a preliminary one first to do a draft, and then a final one. And, yes, they do take fairly good care with them. But it still does involve a certain amount of work, and it still seems to lead to the end of the term, suddenly it's ROLF, even though people have sort of been putting things into the folders throughout the term, it still becomes a chore at the end of the term. And people are getting, oh, have I got enough, and you know, have I got enough information. And all that sort of stuff.

Int: And how do you answer those questions. How does anyone decide how much is enough?

K: Well the parents actually do, because some of the parents said there's too much ... you have to be very careful what you put in there, because if you put too much then it becomes totally overload, and they haven't got the knowledge that we have to be able to glean the necessary information.

Int: No. That was my next question. What, I mean there are obvious advantages and things to learn just by a student doing this activity. So that's in a sense one goal. And another goal is to, for teachers to be in a position to make some response to what students have actually written, as an observation or reflection, which presumably will reflect back on learning, you would hope. But I was going to ask you, what are your objectives in terms of parents? What do you want them to learn from this activity?

K: I would expect they would learn by looking at the ROLF folders. I've actually had parents, with their child's folder, still ask just where they're at and how they're going?

Int: Against what would they judge that though?

K: That's the problem ... something that we're starting to face is comments like, does the best work go in there? Not necessarily, because some parents think well perhaps it is the best work. Is that what my child can actually do? Is this, would it be better for me to see their spelling book, and see exactly what ...

Int: Would they normally see the spelling book?

K: I should hope so. They take them home for homework and I would have thought they would have seen it all, so you know, I find that a little bit hard to fully understand.

I: ... with the ROLF being over a year you would see genuine, measurable progress.

Int: Which even a non-professional could identify.

K: Oh yes, yeah.

I: Most certainly, so mum and dad would say yeah, well my kid over the year has moved along this way.

Of course, like anything new in schools, it will need a lot of educating of parents.

> I had one parent whose child was very advanced last year recently say to me, I just think this, you know, putting all this stuff into your folders, it's just a waste of time, she said, I'd rather you spent the time teaching my child. And she was an exceedingly well read, intelligent parent, so ... !

However the use of this particular strategy will not ensure its integrity, any more than will the existence of a portfolio of student work ensure the achievement of the goals espoused above. The teachers in the following extract have forgotten (or have never been trained in) the conceptual base, the pedagogic purpose, of all this work.

> I don't know how we're doing them now. It's not really a challenge to just comment on a piece of draft and chuck it in a folder. There needs to be probably a forum for getting something that's a little bit more meaningful and maybe giving some of the teachers ideas because the classroom teachers are the ones who have to work with it and they know what they find useful, but we haven't had any of those, it's more or less been imposed, 'you will collect these pieces of work'.

Encouraging parental acceptance

Long-term, there is the bottom line that parents can, through the levels, determine the weaknesses and strengths of the child, and be empowered to ask the school what is being done to address these manifested areas of weakness. It can be a powerful, diagnostic tool for parents, assuming they have been taught how to use it. Parental acceptance will be encouraged if their child is able to engage in his or her own learning, and if the benefits are clear. Teachers say they believe parents want to know about how their child sits in relation to his or her peers, and profiles are able to supply those needs if the reporting instruments are fine enough.

> One of the mothers who's really tuned into this sort of stuff said that with the other (previous) marking system, As, Bs and Cs, a unit in Year 9, or nothing in Year 9 which relates it to the next unit they're going to do in Year 10, so there is no indication that the child is improving. If they get an A in one unit, they get a B in another unit, they're not related in any way shape or form. Does that mean the student's improved, or is just not very good at that unit? And they're very happy with this (new reporting process). They could actually see improvement, and if they're keeping these reports they could see improvements throughout the year, throughout the child's school year. So they were happy with that and we also had room down here and we wrote in handwritten comments, and they preferred the handwritten comments than the computer generated ones.

But imperfections are to be expected.

> I can't see how, with the limitations of assigning levels for example, in our situation of science, where we have three people teaching a group, the level is only going to reflect eight weeks' work and it's not going to give anyone a really good snapshot. It's going to be a pretty blurry picture about kids' achievements. In that sort of situation I can't see how it's going to be of any value to parents or DECS or teachers.

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> Right now, the aim is not to confuse us so much that we don't know what we're doing. We still have to report to parents what the kids have done. We've tried in the statements, into the levels as much as possible. If there's a few holes in it, well okay, we'll have to address those next year. But right now we've got teachers running around in circles with the amount of work they're doing right now. Introduce anything extra ... We're looking at the easiest way out. We've still got to report to the parents, be fair to the kids and be fair to the staff. Is that about right?

Reporting to the system

It is at this point in the process that the greatest danger of conspiracy theories exists. Teachers and schools often fear the uses to which their reporting to systems will be put. Systems will need to be very clear about the intentions, or teachers will refuse to cooperate. It should not be difficult for systems to identify the intended uses and enter into contractual undertakings with the providers of the data.

There do not appear, however, to be any strong doubts among teachers about the wisdom of being able to collect state and nation-wide data via profiles. They commonly asserted that this was a preferred way to collecting a state or bigger picture than the use of standardised testing. If it is meant to be a replacement source of data, teachers will continue to urge a reduction in standardised testing.

V: The Board of Studies makes what I consider to be lots of decisions without considering what their impact will be on schools. And the Board has very few school people on it. It's got a whole bunch of public sector education people—you know, public servant type people who haven't been in schools for some time, and a number of community representatives and a lot of TAFE, well used to be TAFE, now DEET people. And so stuff comes along like profiles and I'm sitting there thinking there's an awful lot of work in this.

Int: The ramifications extend ...

V: Oh! The ramifications. We are in a terribly over-assessed system and there's maths and English testing at Year, usually 5 and 7, but it's now Year 4 and 6. Also at Year 10, there is moderation and there are external exams. I'm sorry, we call them 'instruments of assessment'. At Year 11 there's the expanding octopus of moderation. And Year 12 you have got the SSABSA assessment processes, which have become a monster.

D: And we also have the MAP *(Multilevel Assessment Program)* where we test the primary school Year 6 and ...

V: We trial ...

D: Pardon. We trial them. And they also put in questions from Year 7 and Year 8 to see whether or not our kids are doing successfully well at the Year 7 and 8 program in Maths.

V: All primary schools do the MAP. Group studies, there's one other—not all high schools trial stuff for the MAP program. When we trial questions for the MAP program there are also consequential questions for our own kids to see how the program is going. So we have a measure of external testing at Year 8, Year 10, Year 11 and 12. Profiles are coming along, but they're not replacing anything. They are in addition. And I, you know, my view is that if you put something into a school given the fact that we're spending now more and more time on assessment and less and less time on teaching, if you put something in, you must take something out.

But there is concern about the uses to which systems may put the profiled information, and the mechanisms for conveying the reporting to systems:

V: We are being asked to keep amazing records and information to demonstrate that the teacher judgement which has been going on for a long time is valid. And quite rightly teachers are saying you've got no reason to question my practice ... it's been okay until now, so why all of a sudden ...

Int: So essentially it's a validation exercise in your opinion?

V: It's a number checking exercise on top of that.

The sheer logistics of teachers being able to access the hardware has been discussed earlier. This is related to the issue of how inadequate most teachers find the software currently being promoted by the systems.

S: KIDMAP was not an easy program to use, and if you had a slower computer, it was actually rather time consuming.

Int: They do say the new version is much better and quicker.

S: Well it would want to be. This is what they told us at the last meeting I went to. And they've also got the courses on it now and stuff like that. But it's a reality—I want to see it before I'm convinced.

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M: Yeah, and then I can choose or not choose to follow that up. But it's part of that information that you carry around in your head *(about kids' learning)* as a teacher, and ... you know, what we have to do is find a way of documenting it. Now I don't think KIDMAP is the way to document it. But I'm not too sure, I'm doing a lot of reading about portfolio assessment and I just downloaded something off the internet the other day on electronic portfolio assessment which is very technology dependent ...

Int: ... which is a major problem, a practical problem...?

M: Yeah. Especially in a school this size.

Int: Why especially in a school this size?

M: Just the cabling. You know, and you'd need a file server. We don't have that, we've gone for stand alones. We've got the internet in so we could ... it's conceivable, it's possible. Then you've got to get staff up to speed, and ...

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V: We've been offered the opportunity to buy the new version of KIDMAP, it's still in my intray. *(To the teachers present)* ... Will we get it?

S: Have you got a hundred bucks to buy it?!

V: Why would we? You need someone as well to take responsibility to maintain it. So it's not just one little ... And its hopeless at keeping what we want to store.

D: Look *(we say to the system)* we have all this valuable information for you and if you can't understand it, its your fault.

The largest concern surrounds the possibility of the profiles being combined so that there is an aggregate for each child per KLA. Teachers are utterly opposed to this. They see it as a denial of the underlying pedagogy.

Int: So you think they access the school data base, do you? You don't think they keep that data discrete? You think they manipulate, change, that data base, as in aggregating?

S: Sure they do. We know they do ... so what's the point of it all?

Teachers who are more advanced in their implementation are much more likely to recognise the dangers of some of the ruses, and it will prompt a cessation of all activity. One principal, during a time of teacher bans, and not wanting his staff to lose the momentum so painstakingly nurtured in his school, came to a very special arrangement with his staff and system. His teachers trusted him, but then, he had trusted and understood them and had the same concerns as they had. It is a model for other school-based decisions regarding the contracting out of data.

P: Well, we've deliberately steered away from putting a real lot of effort into the record keeping for the system, and I've done that deliberately because one of the parts of the works agreement was that in terms of the profile levels that are attributed to this year the system is not to have access to that. The parents can have access to it. The staff can have access to it. The kids have got access to it, but the system is prohibited from having access to it. And we're in this business with EDSAS of being, you know having been connected with a modem to central office and they're meant to be able to actually ... take the data up even when we're not there. Well we've deliberately actually screened this off.

Int: Is this all schools in your system, or just yours?

P: Just ours. Because the work site agreement, the teachers said to me, well, if there's any chance of the data going to the system, we're not giving it to you. And, really, I mean that was—I mean I said that publicly at principal meetings ... I guess if the system wants to take me to task about that, well so be it, but I think this is for kids and it's for parents. And we believe we know our kids well enough to be able to say, 'Well these groups of kids need help, need extra assistance'. So the argument about data being necessary to the system to target additional resources for kids with disabilities, or our Aboriginal kids or our school card holders ... whatever, I mean that argument doesn't wash. We've got that information. All you've got to do is ask us. Which you do, which you usually do on another form anyway, you know.

J: ... And, you know, the idea behind a lot of the attributing of levels is that teachers' professional judgement is to be trusted, and that we do know our children, and then when it comes to attributing levels we should be able to ... like, there's all different levels, and, if this level of professional judgement is basically your opinion, and that most teachers will be able to give seventy percent of their students a level just through their opinion. How you were saying before, you know—look at a child's work and you know this is Level 2 and this is Level 3. And then you might go a bit further for the next twenty per cent, and perhaps check some records or check their books to give the level. And maybe for the last ten per cent you may go and talk to a teacher or you might actually sit down. You're actually not spending as much time on all of that, that paperwork and the record keeping.

J: No, there is an expectation, for the system, only levels. For parents, there is an expectation that there will be descriptive information with every level.

P: Hence the workload. Which we don't need.

J: Schools can choose whether that information is verbal, so parents come to interviews, or whether it's written. We decided that since we had to write written reports anyway, and we were doing this in place of written reports, that we would do it written, and it also allowed us when we were unfamiliar, like if a parent came in an interview and said, hang on, I'm sure my child's a level 3, I've seen a profile before, why have you given them a level 2, if we're not one hundred percent familiar with our levels and that sort of thing to be able to justify it on the spot, it might be difficult. So we thought that if we actually did it written, it sort of gives us a little bit of extra support to have time, for example, if parents want to question something, then we can have our evidence.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has presented some examples of implementation strategies that seemed to the researchers conducting the interviews to be working for the teachers who were using them. There are clear messages about the value of having someone very knowledgeable about statements and profiles in the school to assist others with the implementation processes; about not taking on too much too quickly; about recognising the need to look differently at the curriculum and the inter-relationship of assessment with the curriculum; and the changed nature of assessment itself. There are examples of teachers coping with developing and conducting assessments and with assigning levels. The importance of trusting professional judgement and of making use of conversations with colleagues in the process of judging student learning is stressed. Finally, there are some examples of teachers' views about what is needed in computer programs to facilitate the process of recording information and developing reports.

16 The Perceived Benefits

The benefits of the statements and profiles approach to teaching and learning do not materialise simply when teachers and systems adopt the statements and profiles. 'Teaching and learning' is a process, and, of the schools visited in this study, only a handful had begun to gain the benefits. These schools were all in systems where support had been satisfactory on the key criteria described in Chapter 14, and they had been in the process of implementing statements and profiles for some time. In these schools, teachers spoke from experience of many benefits; their views and some illustrative comments on a range of perceived benefits are presented in this chapter. Conversely, it is worth noting that teachers recently involved in the initiative are not generally able to see the benefits in the process. There needs to be an act of faith, especially if the conceptual understanding is slow to emerge.

> M: We certainly have the underlying negativity in individuals. I mean I'm not saying that every member of my department is swinging from the chandeliers and thinking that this is the best thing since sliced bread. When we first started there were three people on the staff who were prepared to do the trialing for the national profiles in 1992, and those three people were interested ... but you have to be in it to understand the benefits.
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> G: ... once you're out of it, watching them, you see the benefit. Then once you really start enjoying the way you're teaching, as you said before, you do sort of follow it through to the others.

The explicit accountability of all parties

There are several ways in which accountability, which requires an explicitness from all the players, is raised by teachers in relation to the adoption of statements and profiles.

Recognition of range of players

Adoption of statements and profiles involves recognition that there are a number of players in the educational process, each of whom have legitimate goals and responsibilities. The question of the 'reasonableness' of an interest can be addressed only if the interest is explicit.

> I reckon it's an excellent idea in that it ensures a broad curriculum and it ensures that teachers are ... there's some accountability there to not just skip music just because you don't like it, and that sort of thing.

Teachers need to be aware of the ways in which the goals of other parties can and will impinge on their planning and teaching, *before they begin* planning and teaching. It is not sensible to attempt to accommodate 'unreasonable' interests, nor is it possible to do so without distorting the teaching and learning process. The issue is frequently one of balancing interests (for example, those of teachers wanting to focus on their responsibilities being located with students' interests, to the exclusion of parents').

> I: The criticism we get is, or the concern we get I suppose, is, 'My child's in Year 5, I want to know how they are doing, compared to the other year 5s.' And that's something we've always had, ever since we moved away from it. The very old fashioned reporting things. I'm not sure that we have adequately answered that yet.
>
> Int: Is it a legitimate question?
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> I: As a parent of a kid in Year 6, I believe it is. I want to know that my daughter is capable of doing work which the average Year 6 students do. If she's doing better than that, that's wonderful and I'm a proud father. If she's not doing that well, in what areas isn't she doing well? What do we need to do to help her improve?
>
> K: And we're actually saying to teachers now that we need to be honest, because I think some of our descriptions are warm and fuzzy and not honest enough. I think we need to be very clear about what we're saying, and that if the child is not successfully meeting standards, they need to know about it. The child needs to know about it too. I think maybe we're better at telling the child than we are the parents. Because I'd say to them, you know, look you could do a lot better than this. This is not up to what you usually do.
>
> Int: Right. And this is not as good as so and so's?
>
> K: Oh, no, no.
>
> I: No we don't ...
>
> Int: You wouldn't say that?
>
> K: No, we do not compare with other kids, no. By their own standards, what you know they're capable of doing.
>
> I: But if they're not at, say, a Year 6 standard and they were a Year 6 kid, somehow we'd have to convey that to the parents. And that's always a dilemma. You know, they might be working at a Year 4 level in English. And the parents need to know that, I reckon ...
>
> Int: that's a very big discrepancy.
>
> K: But I think most teachers would actually say that to the parent, in an interview, 'Your child is having difficulty'. I know *(some of our teachers)* send notes home through the diary or get parents in ...

Increased communication between teachers about their classroom practices

Increased communication and focus on the work done as a classroom teacher occurs within faculties across year levels, within year levels across faculties, and across levels and faculties, where whole or part school approaches are adopted. This critical process must be seen as networking of the most fundamental, valuable and necessary kind.

> The good thing about the documents that I like is the uniformity, so once we understood the learning area, you could transfer that to any other learning area, so it was easy to pick up another one. I couldn't understand science, but H, as I say, she was our translator there. So we looked at what level we felt ... I never use the word 'gut feeling', it was professional judgement. We were quite professional about it, we really put quite a bit of effort in. It was with professional judgement that we actually levelled the children ... So we worked out what levels we should be doing, and we worked out how the different learning areas actually integrate, and also the strands integrate within the learning area and then how we can use the different learning areas for, we know what skills the children have to have when they leave Year 7, so we looked at the different skills that they had to develop, and then so we're looking at skill strands, content strands, as well as different learning areas. Because we were working on at least two areas then. We ended up with four learning areas, and you could see the relationship just like the curriculum, so that's how we started.

This kind of communication does not occur automatically within schools, nor will it occur without active support, both from within the school and the system. The role of the leader is a central one here and, for maximum benefit from implementation, systems will need to find ways to pay for this person's services to be available.

> And the difficulty is that we're always ... to understand that it's all a matter of finance as far as *(the system)* goes, in terms of more teachers on staff. If we had one more teacher on staff, the ease with which we could do some of these things would, it would be heaven, and we'd enjoy it a lot more, and the negativity would go. As you say it's not about the process, it's about the time that's taken away from other things ...

Following on from the previous realisation and practice, a much increased focus in discussions between teachers occurs on the common denominator of pedagogy. This realisation frees teachers to talk to any other teacher, regardless of KLA affiliation, on the topic of their pedagogy. These conversations do occur.

> M: I think so, because I think it changes. It would have the potential to change the way you teach. Things as basic as area, you know, finding the area of a rectangle. My approach now is to do it with a bit of coloured elastic and on a big grid outside. And to pose questions like, 'Can you find some rectangles that have an area of sixteen square units', rather than just giving them a rectangle of eight by two and sort of saying find this area. So there's a lot more open-endedness in it which you can kind of change the valve on ... according to, you know, where your kids are at and there's more little exit points in questions like that, because you know, some kids—there's actually an infinite number of rectangles that have an area of sixteen square units, but it's actually not necessary for all kids to comprehend that notion.
>
> Int: No. And it also means that kids within the one group learn differently from their peers—I was really trying to get at the notion that people within the same learning group can learn differently at the same time.
>
> M: Yes.
>
> Int: Is that more likely to occur under this kind of arrangement?
>
> M: I think so. Yeah. I think so.

Classroom teachers as pedagogues

Teachers who have been using statements and profiles for some time report significant changes in the style and delivery of teaching they now customarily adopt. Emphasis is now rather more on the learning, as opposed to the teaching. This necessitates an approach which engenders a relaxed view about changing the way one teaches, the strategies one learns (in training, from others or from experimentation and experience) and which one subsequently employs in one's teaching. The goal is for the students to learn and if they haven't learnt it (whatever it is) yet, then the teacher is obliged to try a different tack. The teacher's *modus operandi* is more likely to become one of 'I haven't taught it if they have not learnt it.'

M: The fact that there's an outcome that you're supposed to measure, you want the kids to reach a particular endpoint, and to make judgements about whether they have or they haven't, you have to do things that allow the kids to demonstrate that they've actually reached that outcome. And so you ask questions differently, you ask different sorts of questions, and I think you sort of more or less have to go through certain activities that maybe you wouldn't have had to in the past.

G: You're also challenging kids more to question why they're getting this sort of answer, or why this answer is wrong compared to that answer.

Int: So there's a real focus on the learning process?

M: Certainly, I think there is far more, and the interesting thing, the fact that the kids actually, when we're marking or when we're assessing what they're doing, the fact that they don't get a mark means that they then don't focus on just the mark and whether they fell over the magic 50% or whatever they perceive to be the pass mark they're happy and if they don't they're unhappy but they never really look at the work anyway to find out what they've done wrong and where. The fact that all we do now is identify the point of error, they'll go back now and say, 'Well where did I go wrong? What do I have to do to be able to achieve that particular outcome?' Now that doesn't happen across the board. It certainly happens in more than one class here, and one teacher has become very very good at this analysis of what the kids have done, and gone back over it with the kids, and they certainly said well I can see what I've done wrong, I know what to do and whatever, so that part of the process has had a dramatic change.

G: And a lot of the kids are now saying, 'Oh that was a silly mistake', rather than, 'I got 7 out of 10 and who cares'. 'This one was a silly mistake', and, 'Yes I know how to do it now', and that's giving our kids a lot more too, they're looking at why they got it wrong. And they're challenging each other too, when they see something on the board that they think is wrong. They go through their own little process and decide well it's wrong because that answer can't possibly be the right one because of something we did last week or something we did a month ago.

M: It also challenges our teaching too because in the past when you've had a package that says this is what you had to teach and this is the time you had to teach it in and so you race through and you get to the end and you say, 'Well I've taught it'. You know, it's all very well to say you've taught it but have the kids learnt anything, and there's a huge mismatch there. And for me, and I don't know whether everybody's in the same boat, but I find myself asking a hell of a lot more questions to make certain if these kids have actually picked up on what

I've tried to teach them ... or trying to think of a different way of saying well how the hell did you teach that because my kids are still thick as two short ... and I've gone through it and is there another way, can I do it better? So I think you need to ask more questions about what you're doing and how you're doing it.

G: And I think the kids are finding it more fun too because, because we're asking more questions and because we're coming up with a whole range of different ways of teaching things, the kids ... oh this is really fun, oh can we do this again, and lots of different types of games that we're coming up with just to get the kids through things. Can we do this one again? Oh, can we go back to that? Can we do this sort of thing? It's coming up again and again all the time.

Teaching and learning as a joint task

Teaching and learning is more often explicitly seen as a joint task by teachers experienced in using the statements and profiles—a task in which both teacher and learner have roles and responsibilities. A rationale is offered to learners by their teacher, for every unit of work, theme, task or lesson. These rationales are generally written on worksheets, and take the form of explicit learning outcomes. Frequently, the assessment tasks are explicitly part of the teaching of the unit, and they are thus also described in outcomes terms. In other words, teachers are 'cracking the code' because they are giving the code to their students. Students are then in a position, especially with experience and training, to make judgements about a great deal of their own learning, and of the teaching they are receiving. Their role in the learning process also has become an explicit one. Their question can be, 'Why have I not learnt this?' They can refuse to be taught, of course, by refusing to take some of the responsibility for their own learning. These comments refer equally to primary and secondary students and their teachers, according to our case study visits.

M: I think it's the way we have to head to get that level of interaction and dialogue between them. You know, hopefully going towards what David Clarke calls a *didactic contract* where the kids are actually negotiating what they want to show and demonstrate. So, I mean, this is just pie in the sky stuff, but ultimately I'd be thrilled if some of my kids were to say, 'I'm going to demonstrate my ability to function as a leader in a group by doing this activity', which is a really global learning outcome—not just mathematics—'and here's how I'm going to do it'. At the moment, this is a real tension because I assess very traditionally, very poorly. I mean I have now given up giving kids tests, for example, pen and paper tests, because ... it quite often takes me a couple of days to get a test back to the kids and doesn't form their next step. And it begs the question of why on earth did I give it to them. And so I'm trying to go towards *(what I think is)* the most powerful way ... journal writing stuff. So I might give a question ... a while back, after a discussion about weight and mass, I said, 'Show me an example that shows the difference between mass and weight.' And ...

Int: This is to Year 9s?

M: 7s.

Int: So they all went away and pondered on it?

M: Yep. What they wrote in their journals, and then told me, just spoke volumes about who had received the concept and understood it.

Explicit reporting

Reporting, when explicitly and openly done, allows the accountability to be witnessed by all parties. It should enable the previously mentioned collegiality to transcend state borders and will enhance teachers' capacity to use the reports of other teachers effectively. Thus they should 'know' their students more quickly, and hence provide the students with the appropriate learning experiences.

Reporting, as has been demonstrated in the extracts in this book, can also be useful for students to reflect upon. It frequently results in self-assessment becoming a natural part of the learning process for the students.

> Int: Are the children getting a different kind of teaching, and are there different outcomes in terms of learning? Do they learn different things or do they just learn differently?
>
> J: I reckon they're more focused. They know at the start of a unit what they're going to achieve, especially, say, in the general studies-y sort of places, because it will say, well, we're starting this unit on such and such and we tell them, 'This is what we hope to achieve'. We might do a pre-assessment which they do, and say, 'Okay, you do this now, just write down what you think you know and answer these questions and we're going to do it again at the year end and see how much you've learnt'.
>
> G: Yeah, we do, but not as formally as, say, I would do in Grade 1. We sort of brainstorm it at the beginning of the topic. What do we know? What would you like to know? And that often takes us on our journey as to what areas we can focus a little bit more on, as well as what we hope to do.
>
> J: That's what they do at the start. And the questioning for that would be basically based on those outcomes.
>
> Int: Yes. And at the end of the unit might you do the same questions?
>
> J: Exactly the same ones. And then we've got copies of all this.
>
> Int: Now the idea of kids owning or contributing to their own curriculum, that's embedded in this approach too, isn't it? The fact that kids have been given a chance to be more explicitly part of the journey, to use your words.
>
> A: I think, I think basically that's as it should be.
>
> G: For a long time we've always said that you are also responsible for your own learning, for a long time, and I think that's just a natural extension of that stance ...

Such teachers and their students, they assert, feel freed or empowered to describe things as they really are. This applies to each stage of the process: planning, teaching and learning, assessment, applying levels and reporting. The explicitness and plain language employed mean they are neither attempting (nor are they able) to fool anyone.

Some examples of comprehensive report forms designed for reporting student achievement in relation to the profiles are included in Appendix 1.

How students *can* learn differently

The previous section is leading towards an expression of the view that the process of teaching and learning can undergo a fundamental change if the outcomes-based approach is adopted. Students can now play an active role in the pedagogic experience, since all the goals and expected outcomes of the experience are no longer encoded but are now explicit. Teachers report that this fundamental change in learning patterns and styles does happen. Teachers report that this fundamental change in the way that kids learn occurs at all levels of schooling, from Preparatory grade upwards.

Teachers report that their students use the outcomes to assist them in the planning and execution of any tasks, for assessment or otherwise, which they undertake as a part of their learning:

> Oh I ... presenting a student outcome statement to the students and saying, oh, I really want these kids to be able to have achieved this by a given time frame. How on earth can we do it? What on earth can I do as a teacher to put you in a situation where you can prove to me that you've achieved that? And they assisted me. I mean it's been fun. Mmmm. And they'd run the place, mind you it was a total mess and ... but they had a wonderful time ... and they met the outcomes, roughly.

Teachers report that their students' interest is no longer overwhelmingly in the assessment, but equally in the commentary from the teacher, which generally describes the ways in which the work done did or did not achieve the outcomes. The level ascribed to the work is thus justified, and in terms with which the students are already familiar, and they are thus in a position to negotiate, should they wish or feel justified in so doing. These primary teachers found their students responded positively to this process of engagement:

> J: The older students, definitely, if you write something on that report or tick a box or don't tick a box, they will come to you and say, 'Mrs T, you didn't tick this box but I know how to do that, why didn't you tick it?' or 'You ticked that and I don't even know what it means', you know, so, in that sense, yes, I don't know whether we have it in our mind that we are actually reporting to students, but I think they definitely take an interest in what's written in there and really sum it up, really evaluate if what we've said is right or not.
>
> Int: ... So it has to be meaningful to the student as well.
>
> J: But I think, with the pre and post assessments, students definitely are interested in that, especially as they get older *(from Year 3)*. But they can just be little things. Assessments that we did at the start of the year and now we've done them again, I just get the kids to put their own stuff into their own little folio, so they take out the ones that they did at the start and they have a look at how they did then, they look now and they make their own judgements.
>
> Int: So does that mean that they're proud of their learning?
>
> A: I think so.
>
> G: Definitely.

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A: Definitely. And if they've seen that perhaps they haven't made such a big difference, they sort of think, 'Well I'd better get my act together'. It's something you just have to work on with them.

J: It sort of reinforces the idea too, that, you know, they're here to learn. We're working together for the same thing and the activities that we're giving you are there for a purpose. By doing them you are going to learn, and if you do them you will improve and I think that feeling's definitely there.

Part of the pay-off of working to this model is that the students become very skilled at identifying what they are good at. Progress, on some of the strands, is nearly always evident, and can be praised. Their weaknesses can be more readily seen in a positive light, as something to be worked upon.

A: I must admit I had a journal, my own journal, that I draw up a page for each student in it, a page for each class and if my kids are working on something, if I'm not sitting in groups working with them, or even if I am I've got my journal with me and I'm just making anecdotal notes all the time on the writing, or if I've had a discussion with them on a particular skill or whatever, I make notes of that. Because when you're getting into your Level 5s and 6s it's the students recognising they have a weakness or a need for something and they actually are looking for ways of improving. It's that notion, whereas once upon a time we'd say, 'Hey, look, you can't write a paragraph, let me show you how to do it'. The children are recognising that we have to take on responsibility for what we do, and they need to discuss those issues with their teacher.

Int: So the students are really learning, not learning different things, they really are learning differently.

P: Mmmm.

C: Mmmm.

A: It's more student-centred.

With a teacher able and willing to justify a curriculum, how it will be taught and how it will be assessed, students are more readily able to become active agents in their own learning, no longer able to adopt the helpless or confrontationist position convincingly with their teacher.

P: I give them the blank cover sheet and the outline at the top is going to be so they can fill that in, and then we actually talk about, well what is it that we're looking for, what are we going to be assessing, how, and what information are you going to get back? We put that in there, and then this is the marking key where I can actually say well yes they have got it there or they haven't. And before the students submit it they do this one here, they actually fill in 'what do I do well' and 'what can I improve on', so they're taking some responsibility for what they need to do to get parents to comment.

This one here is not quite what we were looking at, but we felt that there were only three categories there, there wasn't enough scope, enough range, and I actually started this as an oral piece for my upper school students that aren't actually working on outcomes at all, but I wanted them to sort of start thinking in terms of outcomes rather than in terms of marks. That started as an oral thing so it became a marking key rather than a cover sheet. But a number of people have seen me using it and said, 'Hey look we want to make a bigger range in our cover sheets, can we have a go at playing around with this one?'

C: There's a new super duper model for us here ...

P: I said that today with my Year 8 assignment for comments and cartoons and I put things on it like, you know, it says something about 'demonstrate the following skills and understandings', and I put things like paragraph writing, note making, drafting and editing, conventions of comics and cartoons, all those sorts of things. Just general requirements that I'd be saying to the kids, like I expect you to write in paragraphs, you must hand in your notes, all that sort of stuff, and I'd be looking at it ... just explicit there so the kids know when they put their assignments together to put them with their cover sheet—they have to check that.

C: Which is making them responsible for their own work.

In addition, the profiling model validates the truism that people learn at different rates and in different ways. It caters for individual differences because it allows for students to be at different levels within the one KLA. This is seen by teachers as realistic. Thus teachers are comfortable with the expectation that one student can (and many will) be on different levels for separate strands. (Dealing with the technical and practical exigencies of this theoretically reasonably proposition is another matter.)

V: Can I show you, I've got a number of very low literacy kids in my Grade 6 who have always been very much at risk. With this, the new 'Viewing' section of the English, I did a viewing exercise, including visual literacy, last term where those children who were most at risk actually came out with the visual ... their viewing was way ahead of those kids who are perfect readers. So dramatic. And they have achieved actually higher viewing outcomes than they ever have been able to with their literacy type outcomes. And the pride that gave these kids! I mean their work was actually taken off to the English key teachers meeting in Hobart because it was just so dramatic an achievement. Because we had to start thinking through viewing as far more than just sitting in front of a video, that's given those kids an ability to achieve at a very high level.

H: See, the implication through a lot of the statements and profiles is giving children the means and the method and the wherewithall to think, to cooperate, to make decisions. That can't just come through chalk and talk, because it's your view. And you see we've got to be vigorously supported to develop those skills in children.

Reporting against the profiles can help

The focus in reporting is on what the student has learned (actually knows and understands) and can do. This constitutes a major change for many participants in the teaching and learning process.

> The biggest advantage I think is it tends to focus teachers' attention on what the kids are actually learning as distinct from what they might be presenting. That's really been a reason that we felt it was easier to try to ... these are the sorts of skills that the kids should have in maths at this level, then how are we going to see if they've got them or not? We tend to change the focus on it. And sometimes, in high school more than primary, teachers tend to focus more on the content they're delivering than what they're actually getting across to the kids. I think that's a product of the way high schools are organised, with the shorter periods—and that's changing now.

What students have learned and can do can be clearly demonstrated and reported. The evidence is to hand already, especially if portfolios, better still ROLFs as described in the previous chapter, are maintained.

Retaining this evidence is another aspect of the active participation in the learning process and of the ownership students can feel of their own learning. Even in lower primary school, it seems, students can be encouraged to retain and store their work, as evidence of certain outcomes having been achieved by them.

Int: What is this? (looking inside a ROLF)

K: That is something we did at the end of the year on strengths and weaknesses.

Int: And in the teacher comment, would you comment on how they did in the year, or how the student has evaluated how they have done in the year?

K: I would do a summary of their achievements.

Int: Right. Which may or may not agree with what they said!

K: Oh, they do. It's amazing.

Int: They mostly do agree with your assessment?

K: Oh, kids are incredibly honest. And if they put something down there which I totally disagree with, I would be surprised. I've only found that happen once or twice. Kids are amazingly honest with that.

Int: They may well be honest, but they're obviously also capable of making those judgements.

K: Oh yes.

Int: Now how did they learn to make those judgements?

K: We train them. I find kids I've had for the second year have a lot better understanding on self-evaluation than kids I started from scratch with.

Int: Do you use kids across the school? *(Teachers at another school)* said they'd found it very useful, where they'd inducted one class, when they were inducting their next year's group, to ask the previously inducted kids over to help. The older students would say to the new lot, 'Well, what sort of questions do you have to ask yourself in order to answer this question?', etc. And, you know, lo and behold there it was, all happening.

K: ... because the reception and the junior primary teachers do find this tricky ...

Int: Would those students do any self-evaluation?

K: Yes, but then it involves a certain amount of describing. They do it in a different way.

I: They have little boxes ... choices and all that sort of stuff, which the children colour in.

The benefit, for students who enter a contract of responsibility regarding their learning, is greater ownership of the whole learning process. Self-assessment is an integral part of this process.

[On the negative side, training and encouraging (frequently called nagging) of their students to be responsible for this evidence collection can be onerous for teachers, and it certainly enlarges the teachers' workload, often in ways teachers do not favour. The following teachers could see little benefit and thus saw it as an extra burden:

> D: Now, the folios, you give ... a student a folio you're not likely to get it back at the end of the week. So it doesn't become a student's responsibility, it's a teacher's responsibility ... But for moderation ... there's a hundred or two hundred folders for moderation, to take in, you know ...
>
> S: Whole class folios—teachers nearly break their backs.
>
> V: ... Occupational health and safety issues of carrying all these stupid bloody folios.]

When combined with the diagnostic power of the profiles, to assist in the identification of areas of knowledge/skill/understanding which are weak and need more attention for any particular child, profiling is seen as an extremely valuable methodological tool.

> It's probably critical that you tend to magnify (science) misconceptions if you don't establish what the conceptual position of your student is before you start to explain and build on it. And, I probably have to refocus on matching my expectations of what students can actually do; the skills that they have in terms of their cognitive, their levels of cognitive development, and their levels of mathematical skills, linguistic skill, and communication skill that all of these from an integrated point of view are important in understanding science, and where a child is having great difficulty reading, that in many cases stops understanding. But if you say to a child I'll explain it this way, and then you get their friend to explain it, and you say no, it's like this and you can build that and show them, they can understand a great deal more than just having to depend, say, on the written word, so it's made me refocus completely in terms of explaining. And, as far as assessment goes, all my assessment now is open-ended. I don't have any really closed assessment procedures, so that students are able to demonstrate as much as they possibly can, rather than be limited by the task.

This extract alludes to the incentive teachers gain from their students' improved learning: the incentive to retain the statements and profiles innovation, despite the work it entails.

How students can also learn different things

Some of the learning patterns and styles mentioned in the points under the previous heading, 'How students *can* learn differently', indicate the ways in which, by engaging in this approach, students learn more than the mere content of the curriculum. This is when *how* you teach and learn will make a difference to *what* you and your students learn. Students are said to learn more about the learning process than is, or can be, the case in an encoded model.

Teachers assert that their students learn better. By this they mean students learn the curriculum more readily—and they learn important skills about themselves and how they learn, and management skills which are useful in life as well as

specifically in relation to learning. Whilst the 'extras' their students learn are not part of any written curriculum, teachers consider them to be natural extensions to learning, rendered inevitable by the changed teaching and learning model implied by the outcomes-based approach.

> M: See, I think the way things are going through this way, the way it's going through right to the end of high school, I do think we are fitting children more for decision making. So, when they get to high levels in high school and matriculation, then uni, they have the wherewithall to go and find out what they need. I think that's—in the past I've said (we made) a big ... error in that children were just fed information, it was regurgitated, and they couldn't do the analysing of things. And I think this way of teaching is really giving them the skills to meet those ...
>
> V: And actually having taught in the 1960s I would not change the way we are today for anything. Going right through this is the best ever as far as I'm concerned.
>
> H: I think it is too. I'm enjoying seeing children just bloom.
>
> Int: The children that previously would have just dropped out?
>
> H: Yes, yes.
>
> V: And it went horribly the other way in the 70s where it was a free-for-all and it didn't matter if they learnt, really ...
>
> H: Not if they had a good time and enjoyed themselves. The 60s was when they all sat in rows and they did as they were told.
>
> V: And now they have to make their own decisions, and they are responsible for their learning, and they know they're responsible for their learning. We give them the opportunities but they are ultimately responsible.
>
> H: I'm enjoying this ... But I think, to me these documents seem—to follow on from what you say, it's bringing everyone back onto a level after this free-for-all. It's now—there's been glaring errors in literacy and numeracy and all these things, the high unemployment and we now are coming back to ... back onto an even keel and we're making sure that they come out of the system with ...
>
> M: There are certain things set which is why actually with us being older we probably appreciate the standards being set, but being allowed that freedom to use them as we see fit, still getting the students to those standards.
>
> H: And also too, young teachers coming into the system over the last, you know, fifteen years, if they were lucky enough to have an older teacher there to give them a bit of help with someone who's having a learning difficulty, to give them a hand ... I think these are good for giving them starting points, I really do think that.

Teachers who feel threatened by losing the centrality of the more traditional role are not well suited to this whole approach. These teachers frequently assert that they teach a subject (this can be just about any) rather than a KLA, and that it needs the old 'tried and true' teaching approach for effective learning. 'Old' values can be

asserted in the manner of those in the previous extract, and yet still have a positive effect on pedagogy.

The 'pointers' (see chapter 1) were frequently said be to useful in expressing these 'extra' kinds of outcomes, and teachers find these a validating aspect of the statements and profiles. There were suggestions that the pointers' usefulness was related to their plain language, and this characteristic makes them useful for other audiences.

C: What we found is that the language of outcomes was teacher friendly, but no good for parents ... Whereas we found, and what we're still working on, is looking at the pointers, within the profiles, to find language that parents will be able to understand. And we're still engaged in that.

Y: And we're still developing comments from our reports, so that ...

C: What we do is we have computer generated comments. We have these scan sheets where we put all our stuff and then that's given to the ancillaries and inputted.

Y: So if a student's completed something we can say yes, they've done that and you can say okay this is what it means for parents to say they've done that. You can write it in a way that they'd say, 'Okay, that's what my child can do', instead of us writing these comments about, you know, 'effectively uses journal to explore', or whatever, so it allows parents to say, 'Okay, this is what my child can do'.

Teachers generally regard them (descriptors, from the profiles) as valuable learning outcomes. ACER researchers reported similar findings from teachers when they were discussing learning outcomes in the *Literacy and Key Competencies* report.[1] Indeed, the similarity of some of the learning outcomes in the profiles to the Mayer key competencies[2] should not be allowed to go unremarked.

Teachers' enhanced sense of professional worth

There is an increased professional confidence experienced by teachers who have adapted their teaching successfully to the statements and profiles approach. This confidence derives from many aspects of the experience:

Int: Well, what are the advantages? People are motivated, but what do they think they're achieving by using them?

H: They feel they're abreast of what is happening, the changes that are happening and that what they want it to be ...

B: ... is not to be left behind.

Int: Right, that's part of a professional attitude.

T: And that goes towards promotion and transferring and all that sort of thing ...

H: And a willingness to look at children and look at programs that are going to improve teaching, I think.

Int: So you do think they improve teaching?

H: I think it improves programs in the way our curriculum committee operates, more than having eight KLA Committees, and they all work very hard at keeping everyone informed.

B: I think that communication's the key factor, don't you?

The teachers maintain that there is a much clearer overview of the curriculum, and clearer tracking of the students' learning throughout the students' time in school. Teachers like the way the approach can reduce, to the point of elimination, repetition of content and themes in what they present to their students to learn. They feel it makes for a better product which they can sell with greater confidence. Additionally, it results in an increased sense of control, of professional competence, on the part of teachers.

J: I think people are more, are more comfortable with what they're teaching, is that a true statement? They know where they are, whereas ... even last year ... each class teacher would work up their year's program, but it wouldn't be in consultation with anybody else ...

Int: Do you ever sit down and ask yourselves how remarkable it is that in 1995 there's, there's all these discrete activities and yet in 1996 you work as a team?

J: And there's a focus.

G: The focus is much better.

Int: So is the reason that you keep doing all this work that, for you, it's professionally worthwhile?

G: For me, personally, I could vouch for that. And I think all of us talking about it has made a difference to the staff. And all sort of being on the same wavelength, you know, and conversing and because we all get along so well, too. It's been a very collegial activity.

J: Some members of staff found it more difficult to sort of pick up and run with than other members of staff did, but it took them, some of them needed to have a lot more ongoing professional talk and intercourse.

Int: And who did that with them? Whoever they were sharing their grade with?

A: Oh no, even just like in the staffroom if someone said something, everyone would just join in the conversation ... well this is what I did ... and from there they'd just go and see what worked for them.

*****

Oh yes. I think it has had a terrific effect. What it did was it forced all of us to re-look at our curriculum to see what we're teaching, how we're teaching it and why we're teaching it and where we're teaching it, and I think that was important, because we'd got to the stage where, you know, curriculum's curriculum and nobody really bothered. It's just a revitalisation. It really did, even though it was hard, and it still is and we're still coping with it.

Teachers also experience increased confidence in their individual teaching of their students, due to the validation they have received from their colleagues in the planning stages. Some of the next discussion, however, reveals underlying philosophical differences which need resolution.

> M: I think we'll be using them as a monitoring tool for planning and delivery—I mean, I enjoy using them for planning and delivery.
>
> D: But this is where we fundamentally differ. And it's going to happen in all schools that there will be this fundamental difference. My philosophy is if you use student outcome statements as a planning and delivery framework, you are incredibly limited in what you actually plan around and deliver. Whereas, if you use them as a monitoring tool, then you say well there's simply a tool there to monitor the ... phase of schooling, what kids can do.

The collegial strength among teachers is reinforced when they seek and gain validation of the levels at which they have placed students' work. They are able to justify their allocation of students to levels, to anyone. This makes them feel good.

> I've been providing PD for teachers in other schools on this as well, and initially they're really scared to jump in and make judgements about kids' work, but when you work with them, when they start they correctly make the judgement most of the time straight away. And when they say well I think this kid's a Level 4 and I look at it and say, 'Well, I think they're Level 4 too', and someone else will look and say, 'Yeah, this looks like our Level 4', and they go, 'Well, it's not so hard'. And most of the time they'll say really if they can do it in that context.
>
> Part of the problem with the new teachers here is they've been forced into it. They haven't had a choice, they've come in and all of their classes are operating that way. But when teachers have the chance to do it, yeah, experiment and do it because they've decided to have a look at it and they sit there with kids' work that they've brought with them to do it, they can do it quite easily. They can say 'Well yeah, I can look at this kid's work and see what they're doing and work out that that is Level 4. What was everyone talking about, it's really not that hard.'
>
> And the general feedback I've been getting is that everybody makes out like it's a big deal but when you sit down and do it it's really not that bad. It's just that people put a lot of pressure on themselves when they start out and they expect it to be hard. Yeah, and a lot of the time they don't trust their own judgements. If they're doing it in isolation they sort of think, 'Well how do I know I'm right?' They really do need to talk to someone about it to be more comfortable.

They discover they are able to be more flexible in their teaching than they thought, they tend to see themselves as a rich resource, with a range of strategies and so on, from which they can draw as their students require it. They even see themselves as a resource from which their students can draw directly. Either way, they operate as better teachers. They believe their students learn better and they are excited by this.

> E: Because of the profiles I don't think they are learning different things, though I think sometimes I approach it in a slightly different way. The content is still there, but because it has made me more aware of their weakness (or their strength), or their lack of understanding in certain areas that I try to build up, that it has made my *approach* slightly different, rather than the actual material.
>
> Int: When they get a set of comments like this, and there is more detail and more explicitness here than in the previous type of report, I am wondering might not

that mean—I am wondering whether, because these have been highlighted so specifically in this set of comments, whether it doesn't identify things for the students in a more explicit way and therefore in a form that they are able to act on. Doesn't that help them?

J: Yes. They will learn differently. How different is 'he is a nice child, he tries hard'.

Int: People in the South Australian schools who have really adopted this with any kind of vigour, say that the student portfolios, for which the student has to be responsible—and this is in primary school—they find that their students actually become much more active in the structuring of their learning. Do you have any evidence that this is beginning to happen?

E: Well, after receiving this report she was a much keener student, the work was coming in more regularly. This was something I was finding.

S: So it is a more focusing experience.

E: It is better quality work and as I said they started ringing up after these reports and this was the first time I had had students ringing me up saying, 'I don't understand, I am doing this project can you send some information?'

Int: So it is a debriefing that is actually making sense and, if anything, increases the level of engagement?

J: Well, cynically speaking, often it is when teachers are writing reports that they can really focus and essentialise their own thinking about the student's performance. For some of the students one would hope that it wouldn't be the case, but it may be the only time there is some sort of formalised affirmation of their progress—and I think that that is a useful function even if it had no effect on the student. Very useful for the teacher to conceptualise, and write down what their view of the student is. It is certainly much more instructive to the people in whom we confide (community-based tutors).

E: See, there is another one. With her it actually helped even more. They work together, they are sisters. What was happening was they were coming to school late and missing the lessons. They were actually at school but they were coming in at 9.30 instead of 9.00 for the lessons and this happens quite a bit, especially down south where it gets cold and the kids don't turn up till lunch time. That's all, but their attendance in the second half of the year was very very good. Quite a change.

In summary

Teachers who have spent some time engaged in the process of using profiles for assessing and reporting their students' achievements, in systems where support has been provided to assist the implementation of this approach, are generally able to see many benefits associated with it. The benefits discussed by teachers in this chapter correspond well with those reported from the nationwide survey (see Chapter 11). Here, in the present chapter, the benefits identified are enriched by conversations which explain both why they are seen as benefits and how the speakers have come to regard them as such. In particular, teachers especially appreciate the increased collegiality and opportunities for communication with other teachers about their day-to-day work; the desirability of a focus on what students have learned rather than on what may have been 'taught'; the flexibility of a reporting framework which allows for students' different learning stages and styles; and the increased professional confidence that can arise when they have successfully adapted their teaching to the approach.

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[1] S. Mellor, G. Withers, M. Batten, J. Lokan, J. McQueen & I. Carthy, *Literacy and the Competencies: Teachers' Perspectives*, Research Monograph No. 51, ACER, Melbourne, 1996.

[2] Mayer Committee, *Putting General Education to Work: The Key Competencies Report*, Australian Education Council and Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training, Melbourne, 1992.

Section 5:

Bringing It All Together

17 Some Good Things Are Happening: 'How Can We Salvage the Situation' Everywhere Else?

From the chapters in the first part of this book, from the report of the survey and from the description of the school visits, it is clear that enormous amounts of resources, time and professional energy have been expended in the process of developing and implementing the Curriculum statements and profiles for Australian schools and their derivatives. It is also clear that implementation is not yet universal, depending on state and territory policies and sometimes on circumstances within individual schools. Sufficient work has been done in schools for this to be a good stage at which to take stock of the endeavour, to ask whether principals and teachers feel that the time and energy expended 'at the coal face' (not just in head offices) has been worthwhile, and to glean recommendations from those who have expended more time and effort with a view to helping those who have not yet moved as far down the track.

Of the responses received to the survey, only a handful were from schools which were not yet implementing any aspect of the statements and profiles. A few principals notified ACER that they would not be completing the survey because their school was not as yet involved with the implementation, and there remains the unknown of how many of the non-responding schools were also in that situation. The evidence from schools where implementation activities are under way, combined with the richer evidence from the schools visited, suggests that there is generally still a long way to go before the implementation can be considered to be full in the systems where it is being undertaken. The evidence suggests, too, that there is an even longer way to go before the implementation can be regarded as fully successful.

In the state which has made the most progress, South Australia, a more detailed survey carried out in term 4 of 1996 showed that there were some schools which considered that they had almost completely implemented all five steps of that state's 1995-1997 'implementation plan'. On average, though, the schools rated themselves, at that time point, as only half way through the process.[1] In terms of the plan itself, and the extra time given to schools for reporting following an initial evaluation done late in 1995,[2] 'half way' is about where the schools should have been at that stage. Generally, secondary schools rated themselves as less advanced in implementation than primary or area schools but again, this was in accordance with the phased implementation in South Australia which began first in primary schools. It would be doing all parties a disservice to expect such a massive change, as the outcomes-based approach behind the statements and profiles for all areas of the curriculum entails, to be fully adopted anywhere in less than five years.

As the title of this chapter implies, there *are* successful examples of implementation aspects occurring, and there *are* principals and teachers who, based on their experiences, can see many benefits flowing from the approach. Examples of these are featured in the survey chapter and throughout the case study chapters. By and large, opinion is quite widespread that the approach is valuable and offers many potential benefits. Opinion is also quite widespread that too much time and effort has already been expended, and the potential benefits too valuable, for the reforms to be allowed to stagnate or to stop. There is still a willingness to see the initiative succeed, but this willingness is accompanied by much frustration and concern that the time for 'rescue' strategies is now, not even in a year's time.

The case study part of the report was compiled with a view to both:

- describing the situation as we found it, in the places most likely to give us the best possible versions of implementation; and
- suggesting ways in which, according to teachers, implementation can be improved. This latter has involved a description of ways in which implementation has not been well handled as well as a focus on factors perceived by teachers to be associated with good implementation.

The title of this chapter came from a principal who despaired that her staff, despite her very best efforts at encouragement, were so jaded by the lack of systemic support and so fed up with the scale of the implementation tasks, that she saw them as ready to toss the whole exercise into the intellectual bin. She believed the time span in which the rescue can be conducted is very short. This anxious tension resonated with teachers around the country. The task is seen as important, but one which, if not accomplished soon, will not have any vitality left with which to sustain itself. Teachers talk about a good idea's shelf life, with a use-by date. This statements and profiles idea has been around for a while and yet still there are many teachers for whom it is a complete unknown—even in these case study schools, many of which were selected for their approximation to 'best practice'.

In addition to mentioning the anxieties expressed by teachers and referred to in the previous paragraph, the decision to sound an alert in the concluding parts of this report regarding teachers' perceptions of inadequate or insufficient trialing and limited implementation was taken in the context of possible mismatch with the pictures of implementation painted in some of the systems' chapters earlier in the book. The researchers were struck during some of the school visits by dissonances between the systems' descriptions of the trialing and implementation processes undertaken and the teachers' experiences. The systems officers all indicated awareness that all is and has not been plain-sailing, but the situation in some of the schools visited suggests that the picture is probably gloomier than officially recognised.

Most often, the dissonances noticed were matters of degree. Teachers in the school would typically know something about the statements and profiles, though there were some who knew very little and did not want to know, but overall not many had been engaged in earnest implementation of the approach. (This was more pronounced in secondary than in primary schools.) Teachers who are genuine in their desire to use the profiles recognise an important distinction, in terms of differing demands on both themselves and the systems, between trialing and implementation. This distinction between trialing and implementation is often not clear in some of the chapters in the first part of the book, where trialing is commonly no more than the beginning of implementation rather than a separate stage. The teachers we interviewed in some schools tended to think that they were still involved in trialing exercises when their head offices probably regarded their work as 'implementing'.

A further component to the researchers' concerns, reflected in the approach adopted in this concluding chapter, is the rather slight degree of implementation which has been achieved in the states and territories as a whole. Some of it is characterised by great variability between schools and inconsistency between faculties, schools and systems. This state of affairs does not seem to be widely appreciated. Evidence from our survey and school visits indicates that, except in South Australia and to a lesser extent Victoria and Tasmania, implementation can only be described as 'beginning'. There is a suggestion in some of the systems' chapters earlier in the book that a slow approach has been taken and it can now speed up. The first part of this sentence can be said to be correct, but, from the evidence obtained during our visits to schools, the second part may be a false expectation. It is a characterisation which makes no reference to the limited range of the work done by many teachers (in terms of how many are actively involved, and at what stage in the sequential process). Scale, in a matter such as this, is a critical success factor.

A relatively slow, staged beginning to implementation is probably desirable, especially in such a comprehensive reform. The only way there can be sufficient resources to support and sustain the reform is to make use of progressive training: a 'train the trainer' model in which the expertise spreads to wider groups. Printed materials, without further support, are not enough, as has been extensively said by our survey and case study respondents. If the implementation proceeds too slowly, however, some of the benefit of this 'knowledge dissemination' model is lost as key individuals move to other responsibilities. Clearly, at present, there are still teachers who have not been introduced to the statements and profiles, nor even to the outcomes-based approach. Training and support needs remain substantial. There is nothing positive to be gained by pretending that implementation is further advanced than it is. Teachers in the field are worried that this great idea is going to be damned by false goals and impractical expectations.

How, then, can 'a few' be turned into 'the many'?

From our visits, the almost-universal conclusion of teachers is that systems need to show their colours, to either 'put up' or 'shut up'. With the exception of South

Australia—and even here there is still some criticism of the trialing and implementation activities of the system—there is a feeling among teachers that the systems may not be fully committed to the implementation. This has justifiably been a concern for much of 1996 and into 1997 in Queensland. Most teachers believe the systems hope that teachers will carry the implementation forward for them. But, as experiences in the 1960s and 1970s in the USA and Britain showed (when it was assumed that large-scale curriculum innovations would be taken up 'as a matter of course' once the materials were developed and placed in schools, particularly if the materials were good), even innovations of high quality were adopted only sporadically.[3]

In the present Australian situation, even where systems have demonstrated a commitment to the statements and profiles, teacher criticism is still that full commitment to a full implementation will require more funds. You cannot manufacture silk purses from sows' ears. The researchers were constantly asked to 'get to the bottom of things', and 'tell it how it is'. Setting deadlines by which certain implementations must occur will not on their own achieve implementation of the 'transformational' kind. As discussed in Chapters 13 and 14, there must be sufficient time for teachers to acquire a solid foundation in the conceptual basis of the statements and profiles in order for the benefits of this approach to be realised and achieved. It would be all too easy for teachers to adopt a 'lip-service' approach, perhaps even ticking boxes on checklists resembling sections of the profiles, which implies little more than implementing an outcomes-based approach in a misunderstood and inadequate way. (Indeed, if given unrealistic deadlines and insufficient support, teachers may have little choice but to use the approach in this kind of minimal way. It is mere compliance, not committed implementation.)

> J: At the last school I was at they had Social Studies, but it became part of their, it was in their school policy and they wanted the evaluation and the assessment for their community so they were really pushing it. But, if you took the staff aside they weren't using it, but they were submitting it to the admin. because they felt an immense amount of pressure to get it right, and to record everything down on their sheet. But most of them, if they had to do the recording, would actually sit down at home, and they would just do it, and then they would hand it in. So then when it came to the classroom, they were doing Social Studies and it was 'Aboriginals and Torres Straight Islanders', and there were no resources. And when they mentioned that there were no resources they were just told to go to the district office and pick up what was there and run with it ...
>
> Int: It doesn't sound like a very good strategy there, no support to staff at all.
>
> J: No. They thought it was a good strategy, but people were just so intent on getting their assessment and the evaluation side of it that they didn't realise that they had to bring the staff along as well.

The case study section of the report was designed to highlight strategies which systems and individuals can adopt as models. There has been criticism of all the major stakeholders, but especially of the systems. This linguistic generic, 'the systems', has been adopted because it seemed to the researchers that to single out any one system is not productive. And the systems are not always monocultured—

as has already been reported, regional differences within systems are a feature of this initiative at present.

The writers of this case study section hope that some readers may find the report to be an exercise of self-discovery and self-recognition. Individuals and schools are a feature of this section of the report, not just as providers of information, but also as indicators of the success and failure of teacher adaptation to this initiative and its demands. Teachers will be able to use some of the extracts, with the accompanying context and analysis, as benchmarks for effective implementation, either for the past or the future. The transcript extracts should also constitute a useful data bank of ideas and strategies, linked to teaching and learning objectives, which teachers can draw on in the time ahead. Issue clarification is part of the intent of this case study section of the report. Teachers have a good track record for learning from other teachers, and this report will be an aid to programs which have these goals.

Strategies of trialing and implementation adopted by the various systems and those used within schools have been referred to in earlier parts of this book. The reasons we (supported by teacher comments) believe these strategies to have been successful or not are also articulated in the report. Naturally, we hope that systems and schools will take notice of the effectiveness of those strategies, and regard the effective ones as the ones which are worth replicating in future work. The more effective strategies will be effective because teachers will respond to positive evidence that the systems, and the leaders in them, are prepared to support the initiative. Teachers will not embrace or endorse something which is not being committed to by the leadership in the systems. This is not a revenge reaction, but a pragmatic one. Both parties' commitment is necessary for success.

Some of the systems have indicated plans which do not seem, on the basis of these findings, to be well advised. Some generalisations can be made here about trialing and implementation, not all of which have been specifically addressed earlier in the report. They are that success cannot be expected to be attained:

- when the implementation experience is under-resourced, or the resources are poorly distributed and/or timed, especially at the school level;
- when implementation is so partial, or so superficial that connections to the asserted purposes of the reform are tenuous (e.g. trialing assessment for just a few students in a whole class, without building on this to expand the exercise);
- when attention is directed to one aspect of the reform, when the two aspects were designed to be used together (for example, take-up of profiles rather than statements, or vice versa);
- when a reform is seen to have several stages, with a sequence, but the initial major attention is directed to the stages which logically come later rather than the ones which belong earlier in the sequence (for example, assessment via the profiles rather than planning via the statements and profiles in tandem); and

- when no benefits can be seen to flow from the experience (as will inevitably tend to happen in all the above cases ... and has).

Each of the above-mentioned processes is a measure which is counter-productive to the acceptance and effective implementation of the preferred outcome of this implementation. In some places in Australia there are teachers who have experienced most, if not all, of these mistakes in trialing and implementation (see the next extract for an illustration). All have experienced *some* of these mistakes. Thus many teachers currently see the whole exercise in the most jaundiced way possible—as no more than the most cynical attempt to check up on teachers and their assessments. People in some schools are angry. The principal and staff in the next extract remain unimpressed with their system's version of statements and profiles, its trialing and implementation process and its professed intentions for profiling:

> V: I guess my fear at the moment is that, in the process of swings and roundabouts ... we seem to be getting to the stage where we're getting down to some really explicit outcomes that we'll be able to tick off in boxes. They'll be very specific and we'll tick them off and they'll be right and the whole process that we've gone through in maths education and maths assessment in the last two to three years, which has been saying we need to be open-ended, we don't want to be constricting kids ...
>
> S: But it's all for the system. What's the sort of information that they want to collect about student outcomes and learning in schools? They want to know, this student was assessed as being at Level 3, has that student moved? They don't want to know the wealth of information that that student has acquired and demonstrated throughout the year. They simply want a statistical piece of information about what that student's done, and I think that's why many teachers are very suspicious of the profiles, because there's very little in it for kids and very little satisfaction has been added to the teaching process. It's another chore.

In this instance, turning the staff around to a positive view of statements and profiles is not going to be an easy task.

In conclusion

There are a few major themes recurring throughout this book. Of central concern is *student learning*, and ways in which teaching can be re-oriented to focus on what students have learned rather than on the material that teachers think has been presented. Such a change in orientation is large and cannot be expected to be in place immediately.

An accompanying theme is *how best to introduce, support and sustain innovations in schools*. Much has been learned in the past 30 to 40 years about dissemination of knowledge in organisations, and was no doubt in the minds of those in the various Australian education systems who planned the introduction of the curriculum statements and profiles in their schools. It is interesting that the input collected from teachers in the present study, about aspects of the implementation that were proceeding well and aspects which were lacking in some way, largely mirrored the list of facets of knowledge use described by Owen (who drew on several sources in preparing his review).[4] That is, suitable linkages must be established to convey the knowledge; information should not be disseminated without appropriate quality control (the information, in the present case, had to be in terms and language that would be meaningful to teachers); materials must be distributed appropriately; inservicing/training of consultants and linking agents is essential; and evaluation of effectiveness is important. Owen's synthesis of factors could have been derived from the 'grass roots' experiences the teacher respondents in our study had had of the statements and profiles implementation.

Implications of the above list of factors lead to a third theme of the book, that of *needs*. To implement large-scale curriculum reform successfully, needs for time, for material and human resources, and for professional training are great. After two years of involvement with the statements and profiles in most cases, our teachers and principals are still expressing needs for (further) training in how to align curricula, how to plan their programs based on their curriculum alignment work, how to assess whether students have achieved particular outcomes and how to report students' progress to their parents. An almost universal request was for more time, not only to cope with the tasks of carrying out and recording assessments, but also for better understanding of the conceptual basis and details of the profiles through further familiarisation, further discussions with colleagues, and so on.

An over-riding theme of the book has been *effort*—vast quantities of it, in many forms and exerted by many players. Certainly too much effort has been invested, as said earlier, to think of not continuing with the approach. There would be too much to lose, in the form of very alienated teachers, if the effort put in over the past two to four years by those committed to the approach proved to be in vain. As also said earlier in the chapter, at this stage there is still a willingness to see the initiative succeed. Full success, however, is not likely to come without further well-directed actions and money from systems.

It is important to repeat that teachers who are feeling more positive about statements and profiles believe there is much ground to be made up, if the implementation is to be rescued.

> But they need to resource it. They want this introduced, and they are not giving schools the resources to do it, let alone to do it properly.

To end on a positive note, it is also worth repeating the thought that, despite all of the flawed aspects of implementation, many teachers remain committed to the initiative—such is their preference for worthwhile teaching and learning experiences. These final extracts from the interviews all reveal teachers who see positive benefits from the statements and profiles approach, and some who also offer hints about ways to enhance implementation.

> A: I think people actually said to us it's the biggest learning curve that we've actually been on. I mean to be ... here and all of a sudden to be like this ... I think

a lot of teachers have been rejuvenated by it. We've got quite a young staff here, but just talking in English circles, but some of us were involved in an NPDP project last year where they worked with English teachers across secondary and language teachers in primary school and some of those teachers have been teaching fifteen odd years, and I'm involved in a similar process this year. When you've got a range of first year out through to very experienced teachers, and to see the vitality and enthusiasm in all of those people really does say something for the way we're going.

P: It's the same everywhere you go too, like all the PD that I've been doing, even when I went to Karratha last weekend. The PD they provided up there—some of the teachers are recent graduates, and others have been teaching for years and years and years, sort of thing. And they're all just going 'Oh I feel so motivated now, I can't wait to go and try some of this stuff out in the classroom, or we could do this and let's change the way we're doing this at our school' and all of that, and it's just coming from everyone and they're just going 'Well now I can see how I can change some of these things in the school'.

•••••

But what I think's good about the profile is that it actually has made people accept that there are challenges, and it's made people think again about the way they do teach, because, if teaching is going to be a very different craft in twenty years time, then it is even now. So I think the most exciting part about this whole thing is asking how is the craft of teaching going to have to change?

•••••

Int: How would you suggest they resource that?

M: I guess giving teachers more reflection time, but teachers being the animals that they are, stuff that they normally do after school they'll now do in their spare time. They won't actually reflect, so I guess you've got to try and create a culture of reflection, of reflective practice which is where things like e-mail can come in, which can then widen it to beyond your own context. We've got the structures in place—the challenge is really firmly in our court.

•••••

That's been one of the good things ... they are actually working documents for the planning and the teaching and the learning that's going on. You use them. Whereas, in the past, you'd spend hours writing up your course of study and then you'd never look at it again. Whereas this is there. It's on the desk. It's there, being used all the time.

[1] T. Frigo & J. Lokan, Evaluation of Implementation of Statements and Profiles in South Australian Government Schools: Follow-up Survey, ACER, Melbourne, 1997.

[2] J. Lokan & T. Frigo, Evaluation of Implementation of Statements and Profiles in South Australian Government Schools, ACER, Melbourne, 1995.

[3] M. Dynan, Dissemination of curriculum innovations: Where are we heading?, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 3 (2), 1983, 60-65.

[4] J. M. Owen, Review of Use of New Knowledge in Schools, Occasional Paper, Institute of Education, Melbourne, 1988.

Appendix 1 Sample Reports

It was the original intention of the researchers conducting the school visits for this project to collect materials for an appendix dealing with reporting. However, during term 3, at the time of the visits, most schools had not finalised their reporting mechanisms and so the decision was taken not to have such an appendix.

As it happened, at the end of the school year a medium-sized Victorian state primary school, which had not been one of the case study schools, produced its reports for 1996 and one of the researchers was an interested recipient. The research team decided that this set of reports would not require complex interpreting or annotations for it to be useful to readers in all states and territories. Accordingly, the school was approached and permission was granted for the reports to be reproduced in this book. A parent at the school, understanding that blank reports tell only part of the story, offered her child's report so that a used example could be shown. Her offer was accepted.

Our purpose in including this set of reports is primarily an optimistic one. This school is in a state which has not allocated great quantities of time or money to the professional development of staff on reporting, and where only general guidelines on reporting had been received in schools before the last part of 1996. If this school's staff could develop reports as good as the set included here, then others can do the same. No doubt others have already done so. The publication of this set as an appendix may encourage teachers in other schools to emulate this staff, to imitate and incorporate wordings and structures which are appropriate to their own settings. The double-sided A3 page plus the extra A4 sheet together constitute a useful model.

Readers of Chapter 15 will be able to recall the range of reporting issues discussed, most of which seem to have been resolved by the writers of this set of reports. The most notable feature of this set of reports, in the opinion of the researchers, is the balance achieved between the generic component (which can be electronically generated) and the personalised, handwritten comments. The meaningfulness of the report is thus child-specific and real, whilst valuable professional time has not been wasted in achieving it. The description of the difference between Levels and Grades is clear. The codes of achievement are defined in such a way that key distinctions in learning are retained. The device which identifies 'effort' is effective. Self-assessment is not attempted in this model.

Deriving from Victoria, the documents are clearly based on the *Curriculum & Standards Framework* (CSF). However, their usefulness can be readily accessed by teachers from other states. The school clearly has not restricted itself to the CSF curriculum only. Outcome statements for other curriculum areas (Philosophy, for example) have been developed. Some of the curriculum areas specified are ones which are reported on a separate sheet of paper. All four levels appropriate to a primary school are reproduced here, so that readers can gain a sense of the selections made from the whole curriculum for inclusion in the reports, as well as a sense of the sequencing of learning outcomes.

The school's principal commented that there are already revisions planned for this version of the reports to rectify deficiencies which have been identified. Additionally, the system expects all learning areas to be reported in 1997. According to the principal, parent response to these reports, which are completely different from those used previously at the school, has been positive. She expressed surprise that not one parent had queried or criticised them. One parent who has three children at the school indicated her delight in the following words:

> When I laid these reports out on the table, I had a full and detailed picture of my children and their education. It's all there, strengths and weaknesses, based on what they can do. Fabulous! I have never understood my children's learning like I do now, with these.

SCHOOL REPORT - DECEMBER

NAME ____________________			
GRADE PREP	LEVEL 1	YEAR __________	

The statements in this report have been based on the Board of Studies Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) covering the following levels.

CSF Location

Year level	P	1	2	3	4	5	6
CSF levels	1	→	2	→	3	→	4

As can be seen, reports cover two year levels. Consequently, there will be some statements of skills that have not yet been introduced to your child.

The statements have been listed to give parents an understanding of the outcomes achieved by your child.

The following codes of achievement indicate your child's development.

1. Est The student has established the skills and knowledge of the level and consistently and independently exhibits all or most of the behaviours in the level in a range of contexts.
2. Con The student is consolidating the skills and knowledge, often exhibiting some, but not all of the behaviours for the level (eg. displays such learning with assistance).
3. Beg The student is beginning to show signs of the skills, knowledge or behaviour pattern of the level in that only a little of the pattern is showing (eg. students occasionally and with assistance demonstrate the learning).
4. NA Progress is not apparent. The student shows none of the skills, knowledge or behaviours of the level (eg. no evidence of progress has been observed).

Since there can be marked differences in the intellectual, social and physical maturity of students in the same year level, this report attempts to indicate your child's growth as an individual and not in comparison with others in the group.

We believe that effort of students is important and can be gauged by the position of the dot on the scale.

Min. ————————————●—— Max.

If you wish to discuss this report further please make an appointment with the class teacher or the principal.

NAME ______________________________ YEAR ______________ LEVEL 1

ENGLISH

Course Description:

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
SPEAKING AND LISTENING Effort Min ______________ Max • Enjoys stories and joins in poems • Listens to the speaker • Speaks in a variety of situations • Retells events and experiences sequentially • Speaks clearly, audibly and confidently • Asks questions				
READING Effort Min ______________ Max • Recognises most sounds and letter names • Recognises some familiar words • 'Reads' books with repetitive and predictable language • Uses a range of cues to predict meaning in text eg. illustrations, initial letter • Makes connections between own knowledge and experience and the information read or heard • Enjoys reading and practices regularly at home				
WRITING Effort Min ______________ Max • Expresses thoughts in writing and drawing • Reads and shares own writing with others • Is aware of purposes of written text • Uses letters and some letter patterns to form words in own writing • Uses known or copied words • Makes good attempts at spelling unknown words • Attempts to write the letters of the alphabet correctly • Experiments with punctuation marks. eg. full stops				

COMMENTS

MATHEMATICS

Course Description:

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
SPACE Effort Min ______________ Max • Draws and builds things remembered, imagined, seen & handled • Uses language such as back, forward, on, beside, etc. • Recognises similarities and differences between shapes • Matches shapes and makes pictures and patterns				
NUMBER Effort Min ______________ Max • Counts, compares and orders sets of objects using one-to-one correspondence • Counts automatically to 10 and beyond • Uses terms such as first, second and so on to indicate place in a sequence of up to 10 objects • Can write and say numerals from 1 to 10 • Can apply number skills to real life situations • Exchanges money for goods in a play situation • Can copy, continue and devise repeating and counting patterns				
MEASUREMENT Effort Min ______________ Max • Uses appropriate language of comparison for length, capacity & mass • Compares and orders lengths, and capacities of two containers • Uses guessing and checking when investigating length, capacity & mass • Understands that clocks are used to tell the time and that times link to things which happen each day				
CHANCE AND DATA Effort Min ______________ Max • Uses language associated with uncertainty such as will, won't, might • Uses pictures of people or objects to make simple picture graphs • Can describe orally what can be found from a picture graph				
MATHEMATICAL TOOLS & PROCEDURES Effort Min ______________ Max • Can use a calculator to record numbers and explore counting patterns • Can describe how a simple number problem can be solved • Recognises ways in which numbers are used in everyday life				

COMMENTS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PHILOSOPHY

***Course Description**: The students are developing skills of dialogue, inquiry and logical reasoning using philosophy novels and manuals, stories or topical subjects to stimulate discussion and ideas*

	Ext	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min____________Max • Participates well in discussion • Able to express ideas coherently • Able to listen to others' ideas				

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

***Course Description**: Health and Physical Education promotes an understanding of physical activity and movement, food and nutrition, health, safety, human development and human relationships.*

	Ext	Con	Beg	NA
HEALTH Effort Min____________Max • Takes part in activities that encourage participation and cooperation • Understands the need for good nutrition and health practices • Identifies what makes the environment safe eg. helmets, sunscreen				
PHYSICAL EDUCATION Effort Min____________Max • Demonstrates simple movement patterns to show actions of the whole body eg. running, climbing • Combines movement with the use of objects by playing with and sharing equipment eg. balls, hoops, beanbags				

SCIENCE

***Course Description**: In Science the students will develop an understanding about: Natural and Processed materials, The Physical World, Earth and Beyond, and Life and Living. At this level, scientific investigations require the following skills*

	Ext	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min____________Max • Makes simple observations and answers questions based on these observations • Sorts a variety of objects and observes patterns in these • Reports on activities using drawings and simple statements				

TECHNOLOGY

***Course Description**: Technology in the classroom involves students in generating ideas and acting on them, as well as in using and developing processes and products that satisfy human needs. Students develop the technological skills of investigation, design, production and evaluation.*

	Ext	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min____________Max • Experiments with different ways to achieve outcomes • Chooses techniques and materials appropriate to the required task • Describes finished product to others • Enjoys using the computer				

STUDIES OF SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

***Course Description**: Studies of Society and the Environment develop a student's knowledge and understanding of Australian society, societies in other countries, local and global environments and the interaction of people with the environment. The skills of investigation, communication and participation are required in each area studied.*

	Ext	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min____________Max • Collects, records and discusses information from shared experiences • Communicates information to others by describing, drawing and role playing • Participates in discussions and activities				

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ATTITUDE

CONDUCT Responsible, highly cooperative Very cooperative Satisfactory Unsatisfactory Disruptive	**SOCIAL ATTITUDES** Evidence of leadership qualities Works well with others Respects others and property Regard for others needs improvement
WORK HABITS Methodical, organised Shows effort in presentation Satisfactory Improving Inconsistent effort Improvement needed	**CLASS COMMUNICATION** Communicates well Confident in communicating Seldom communicates Hesitant to communicate
SELF DIRECTION Independent worker Uses time wisely, completes work Needs some direction Needs much direction	**CONCENTRATION** Attentive Easily distracted Short attention span

DAYS ABSENT	**PUNCTUALITY** Satisfactory Needs to improve

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

Year level	P	1	2	3	4	5	6
CSF levels	1	→	2	→	3	→	4
ENGLISH							
MATHEMATICS							

CODE : Est= Established; Con=Consolidating; Beg=Beginning

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Teacher: ____________________

Principal: ____________________

NAME ______________________________ YEAR __________ LEVEL 1

LIBRARY

Effort Min______________Max

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
SKILLS • Borrows and returns materials • Can locate and shelve Picture Fiction books • Can differentiate between materials from different sections of the library • Uses appropriate library terms eg. illustrator/author				
LITERATURE • Discusses stories and extracts information from illustrations • Completes follow up activities				
RESEARCH • Can locate appropriate information using simple reference materials eg. magazines				

ITALIAN

Effort Min______________Max

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
SPEAKING AND LISTENING • Repeats sentences in familiar, meaningful contexts for participation in an activity • Participates in rehearsed conversations based on familiar situations • Indicates a person, object or picture when it is named or described				
READING • Reads a familiar rhyme, story or poem aloud or sings a song to entertain others • Reads familiar words or phrases aloud to indicate comprehension and meaning				
WRITING • Copies information to write captions for pictures and dialogue for speech bubbles • Labels pictures or items by selecting and copying words				

VISUAL ARTS

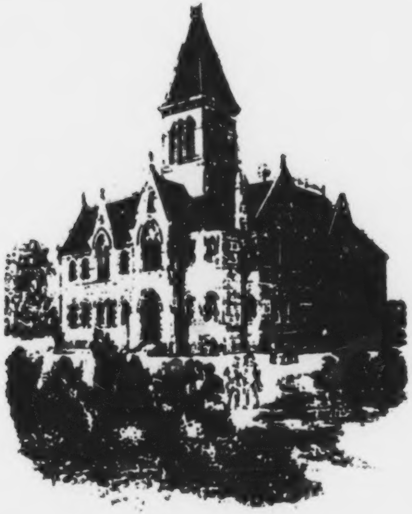
Effort Min______________Max

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
• Demonstrates an inventive and imaginative approach throughout the process of creating an artwork • Demonstrates appropriate manipulative skills and techniques • Displays a positive approach to tasks • Displays an appreciation of their own and other works of art				

MUSIC

Effort Min______________Max

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
• Uses experience and imagination in creating and making music • Uses and explores the basic elements of sound • Shares music making with others				



SCHOOL REPORT - DECEMBER

NAME ______________________________

GRADE LEVEL 2 YEAR __________

The statements in this report have been based on the Board of Studies Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) covering the following levels.

CSF Location

Year level	P	1	2	3	4	5	6
CSF levels	1	→	2	→	3	→	4

As can be seen, reports cover two year levels. Consequently, there will be some statements of skills that have not yet been introduced to your child.

The statements have been listed to give parents an understanding of the outcomes achieved by your child.

The following codes of achievement indicate your child's development.

1. Est The student has established the skills and knowledge of the level and consistently and independently exhibits all or most of the behaviours in the level in a range of contexts.
2. Con The student is consolidating the skills and knowledge, often exhibiting some, but not all of the behaviours for the level (eg. displays such learning with assistance).
3. Beg The student is beginning to show signs of the skills, knowledge or behaviour pattern of the level in that only a little of the pattern is showing (eg. students occasionally and with assistance demonstrate the learning).
4. NA Progress is not apparent. The student shows none of the skills, knowledge or behaviours of the level (eg. no evidence of progress has been observed).
5. NI Not introduced at this stage.

Since there can be marked differences in the intellectual, social and physical maturity of students in the same year level, this report attempts to indicate your child's growth as an individual and not in comparison with others in the group.

We believe that effort of students is important and can be gauged by the position of the dot on the scale.

Min. ——————————●—— Max.

If you wish to discuss this report further please make an appointment with the class teacher or the principal.

NAME ______________________________ YEAR ______________ LEVEL 2

ENGLISH

Course Description

	E s t	C o n	B e g	N A	N I
SPEAKING AND LISTENING Effort Min______________Max					
• Listens attentively to others					
• Expresses ideas in a logical sequence					
• Speaks clearly, audibly and confidently					
• Participates in class discussions					
• Is able to question others					
READING Effort Min______________Max					
• Is aware of sound/letter relationships					
• Uses word attack skills to decode unknown words					
• Reads regularly and makes appropriate choices of materials with teacher guidance					
• Reads with understanding and self corrects					
• Recognises statements, questions and punctuation when reading					
• Concentrates when reading silently					
• Retells a story providing supporting detail					
• Identifies examples of fictional and non-fictional text					
• Understands the features of text such as contents page, indexes and diagrams					
WRITING Effort Min______________Max					
• Shows enthusiasm for writing					
• Writes for a variety of purposes					
• Uses varied and appropriate vocabulary					
• Demonstrates an awareness of spelling patterns and attempts unknown words					
• Knows where to locate correct spelling of unknown words eg. dictionaries, word lists					
• Draws on a bank of known words					
• Expresses ideas in a logical sequence					
• Uses full stops and capital letters correctly					
• Rereads own writing and makes corrections					
• Enjoys sharing completed stories					
• Handwriting is well formed and legible					

COMMENTS

MATHEMATICS

Course Description:

	E s t	C o n	B e g	N A	N I
SPACE Effort Min______________Max					
• Is able to name and draw simple geometric shapes					
• Uses appropriate language to describe characteristics of shapes eg. side, edge					
• Is able to make a simple map					
• Understands concept of symmetry					
NUMBER Effort Min______________Max					
• Can count to 100 1,000 by ones					
• Can count to 100 in twos, threes, fours and fives					
• Uses simple fractional language eg. 1/2 1/4 1/3 whole					
• Recalls automatically basic addition and subtraction number facts to 10, 20					
• Uses diagrams and concrete materials to show an understanding of addition and subtraction to 99					
• Can write number sequences using +, - and = sign and able to select the appropriate operation					
• Demonstrates an understanding of place value to: 99 999					
• Can use materials and diagrams to show an understanding of grouping (x) and sharing (÷) situations expressed in words to 99					
• Recognises coins and records their value					
• Can tender amount and give the appropriate change to 50c $1.00					
MEASUREMENT Effort Min______________Max					
• Is able to select the appropriate informal/formal unit when measuring					
• Estimates, orders, measures and compares					
• Is able to locate dates and events on a monthly and yearly calendar					
• Recognises o'clock, 1/2 past on an analogue clock and digital clock					
• Is able to sequence familiar activities					
CHANCE AND DATA Effort Min______________Max					
• Decides how to collect information					
• Is able to organise information into categories or groups and make simple graphs					
• Describes the information on simple graphs made by self and others					
MATHEMATICAL TOOLS & PROCEDURES Effort Min______________Max					
• Uses a calculator as an aid to counting and to solve number problems					
• Selects the appropriate measuring instruments eg. for time, length, capacity, etc					
• Recognises ways in which mathematics is used in everyday life					

COMMENTS

PHILOSOPHY

***Course Description**: The students are developing skills of dialogue, inquiry and logical reasoning using philosophy novels and manuals, stories or topical subjects to stimulate discussion and ideas*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min_______________Max • Is able to express ideas coherently • Is able to build upon the ideas of others • Shows respect for the community of inquiry • Participates well in discussion and listens attentively				

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

***Course Description**: Health and Physical Education promotes an understanding of physical activity and movement, food and nutrition, health, safety, human development and human relationships.*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
HEALTH Effort Min_______________Max • Displays awareness of the need for cooperation within a community • Understands and explains ways to improve personal safety and the safety of others • Has knowledge of and understands the need for good nutrition				
PHYSICAL EDUCATION Effort Min_______________Max • Participates in movement activities with a sequence eg. running, jumping, gymnastics • Demonstrates basic coordination skills with equipment in creative play and games eg. ball handling, skipping and sharing equipment • Describes the effects of continuous and short bouts of exercise on the body • Displays appropriate team membership behaviour				

SCIENCE

***Course Description**: In Science the students will develop an understanding about: Natural and Processed Materials, The Physical World, Earth and Beyond, and Life and Living. At this level, scientific investigations require the following skills.*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min_______________Max • Can ask questions and make suggestions to solve a problem • Can record observations in a simple format eg. drawings, simple statements • Can report on activities and suggest possible explanations for discoveries				

TECHNOLOGY

***Course Description**: Technology in the classroom involves students in generating ideas and acting on them, as well as in using and developing processes and products that satisfy human needs. Students develop the technological skills of investigation, design, production and evaluation through:*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min_______________Max • Experimenting with different ways to achieve outcomes • Choosing techniques and materials appropriate to the required task • Displaying confidence in using the computer				

STUDIES OF SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

***Course Description**: Studies of Society and the Environment develop a student's knowledge and understanding of Australian society, societies in other countries, local and global environments and the interaction of people with the environment. The skills of investigation, communication and participation are required in each area studied.*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min_______________Max • Can select, investigate and categorise the relevant information • Can communicate a personal view about information • Can participate in and contribute to a class activity				

ATTITUDE

CONDUCT Responsible, highly cooperative Very cooperative Satisfactory Unsatisfactory Disruptive	**SOCIAL ATTITUDES** Evidence of leadership qualities Works well with others Respects others and property Regard for others needs improvement
WORK HABITS Methodical, organised Shows effort in presentation Satisfactory Improving Inconsistent effort Improvement needed	**CLASS COMMUNICATION** Communicates well Confident in communicating Seldom communicates Hesitant to communicate
SELF DIRECTION Independent worker Uses time wisely, completes work Needs some direction Needs much direction	**CONCENTRATION** Attentive Easily distracted Short attention span

DAYS ABSENT	**PUNCTUALITY** Satisfactory Needs to improve

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

Year level	P	1	2	3	4	5	6
CSF levels	1	→	2	→	3	→	4
ENGLISH							
MATHEMATICS							

CODE : Est= Established; Con=Consolidating; Beg=Beginning

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Teacher:______________________Principal:______________________

NAME ______________________ YEAR __________ LEVEL 2

LIBRARY

Effort Min______________Max

	Ext	Con	Beg	NA
SKILLS • Can identify and locate resources from the fiction and non-fiction sections of the library • Knows and uses appropriate library terms • Can shelve picture fiction and fiction books alphabetically • Understands and uses correct borrowing procedures				
LITERATURE • Can identify theme, main characters and main setting of a story and sequence the story's events • Discusses contributions of illustrations to text • Completes follow up activities				
RESEARCH • Completes simple research tasks • Can locate and make use of appropriate references • Can take simple notes and write brief reports				

ITALIAN

Effort Min______________Max

	Ext	Con	Beg	NA
SPEAKING AND LISTENING • Repeats sentences in familiar, meaningful contexts for participation in an activity • Participates in rehearsed conversations based on familiar situations • Indicates a person, object or picture when it is named or described				
READING • Reads a familiar rhyme, story or poem aloud or sings a song to entertain others • Reads familiar words or phrases aloud to indicate comprehension and meaning				
WRITING • Copies information to write captions for pictures and dialogue for speech bubbles • Labels pictures or items by selecting and copying words				

VISUAL ARTS

Effort Min______________Max

	Ext	Con	Beg	NA
• Demonstrates an inventive and imaginative approach throughout the process of creating an artwork • Demonstrates appropriate manipulative skills and techniques • Displays a positive approach to tasks • Displays an appreciation of their own and other works of art				

MUSIC

Effort Min______________Max

	Ext	Con	Beg	NA
• Uses experience and imagination in creating and making music • Uses and explores the basic elements of sound • Presents musical work for a familiar audience				

SCHOOL REPORT - DECEMBER

NAME F

GRADE 4 LEVEL 3 YEAR 1996

The statements in this report have been based on the Board of Studies Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) covering the following levels.

CSF Location

Year level	P	1	2	3	4	5	6
CSF levels	1	→	2	→	3	→	4

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2. Con The student is consolidating the skills and knowledge, often exhibiting some, but not all of the behaviours for the level (eg. displays such learning with assistance).
3. Beg The student is beginning to show signs of the skills, knowledge or behaviour pattern of the level in that only a little of the pattern is showing (eg. students occasionally and with assistance demonstrate the learning).
4. NA Progress is not apparent. The student shows none of the skills, knowledge or behaviours of the level (eg. no evidence of progress has been observed).
5. NI Not introduced at this stage.

Since there can be marked differences in the intellectual, social and physical maturity of students in the same year level, this report attempts to indicate your child's growth as an individual and not in comparison with others in the group.

We believe that effort of students is important and can be gauged by the position of the dot on the scale.

Min ————————————● Max

If you wish to discuss this report further please make an appointment with the class teacher or the principal.

NAME F

YEAR 1996

LEVEL 3

ENGLISH

Course Description: This year most of the work in English has involved a thematic approach and has been integrated with other curriculum areas. Topics covered in the second half year have included The Olympics and Animal "Olympians", The Human Body, and Flight. Whilst studying these topics the students have written reports, read for pleasure and research, presented oral reports and written imaginative stories. Much of the work in spelling has been directly related to these themes.

	Est	Con	Beg	NA	NI
SPEAKING AND LISTENING Effort Min ____________●__ Max					
- Listens attentively to others	✓				
- Speaks clearly, audibly and confidently	✓				
- Responds appropriately to others in problem solving activities	✓				
- Delivers a short prepared talk to peers on a topic of interest, with relevant, organised information		✓			
- Expresses ideas logically		✓			
- Corrects own speech for meaning and accuracy	✓				
READING Effort Min ____________●__ Max					
- Reads widely for personal enjoyment and interest	✓				
- Retells and discusses interpretations of text that is read	✓				
- Interprets & follows short printed instructions or directions in recipes/maps/ games	✓				
- Recognises and discusses different characters in texts	✓				
- Recognises and explains the features of a particular text including paragraphing	✓				
- Constructs timelines or story maps to represent sequences of events	✓				
- Predicts and attempts to work out the meaning of unknown words in texts		✓			
- Clarifies or corrects meaning by pausing, re-reading or reading on	✓				
- Uses tables of contents, index, page number or key words to find information	✓				
WRITING Effort Min ____________●____ Max					
- Writes an imaginative story with a distinguishable story line	✓				
- Able to devise a simple recipe or a set of instructions for a game	✓				
- Recounts experiences in sequence	✓				
- Writes a report	✓				
- Uses suitable setting out and punctuation when writing texts: full stops, capital letters, question and exclamation marks, inverted commas		✓			
- Recognises, interprets and begins to use metaphoric or symbolic language eg as white as snow		✓			
- Uses other texts as models for writing	✓				
- Adds information to the writing in responses to suggestions	✓				
- Uses new words in writing even though unsure of correct spelling		✓			
- Proof reads to identify and correct known spelling and punctuation errors or incomplete sentences		✓			
- Proof reads for meaning and interest		✓			
- Presents writing in a legible and attractive format	✓				

COMMENTS

F is a very keen and capable reader. Her word attack skills are of a good standard and she is reading with some fluency. F needs to be encouraged to proof read more carefully, although these skills are improving too.

MATHEMATICS

Course Description: Students have been developing skills and understanding in all aspects of mathematics. Emphasis has been placed on work in Number (automatic response, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division; common and decimal fractions), Space (polygons, symmetry, scale), Measurement (volume, time, money, area, mass) and Chance and Data (collecting information, graphing, ordering data). The focus has been on practical work and problem solving.

	Est	Con	Beg	NA	NI
SPACE Effort Min ____________●__ Max					
- Is able to match, make and copy 3 dimensional objects	✓				
- Uses directional language when describing maps and locations eg. north, south	✓				
- Interprets and produces maps of familiar location using street directories and atlases	✓				
- Uses conventional names of shapes and discusses properties of figures and objects	✓				
- Predicts, copies and creates patterns involving movement and repetition of shapes	✓				
NUMBER Effort Min ____________●__ Max					
- Is able to read, write, say and order whole numbers between 0 — 1,000,000	✓				
- Rounds numbers to nearest 10, 100, 1000		✓			
- Represents and records fractional parts of objects eg. half a cake	✓				
- Uses notation for decimal fractions eg. 0.1		✓			
- Has automatic recall of multiplication facts	✓				
- Applies understanding of place value	✓				
- Mentally estimates and calculates using addition	✓				
subtraction		✓			
multiplication	✓				
divisions		✓			
- Uses written methods to multiply by single digits and multiples of ten	✓				
add	✓				
subtract	✓				
divide with one digit divisor	✓				
- Selects appropriate operation to solve problems	✓				
- Generates number patterns in sequences	✓				
MEASUREMENT Effort Min ____________●__ Max					
- Selects suitable units when constructing, comparing and measuring eg cm/m/km	✓				
- Estimates, orders, measures and compares using formal and informal units of measure when investigating	✓				
- Uses measures of time and duration, works with clocks and schedules	✓				
CHANCE AND DATA Effort Min ____________●__ Max					
- Records and identifies outcomes from experiments	✓				
- Collects, sorts, identifies and displays data to answer questions		✓			
MATHEMATICAL TOOLS & PROCEDURES Effort Min ____________●__ Max					
- Uses calculators to investigate patterns and operations	✓				
- Uses problem solving strategies to obtain answers to questions arising from everyday situations	✓				
- Tests, checks and calculates measurements and procedures in activities	✓				

COMMENTS Once F understands a concept she had had difficulty with, she displays a great deal of enthusiasm and satisfaction. This is very pleasing to see. F has dramatically improved her 'tables' this year and she is to be commended for all of her hard work.

PHILOSOPHY

Course Description: *The students are developing skills of dialogue, inquiry and logical reasoning using philosophy novels and manuals, stories or topical subjects to stimulate discussion and ideas*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min ______●__ Max				
• Shows openness to new ideas	✓			
• Displays logical thinking skills	✓			
• Is able to build upon another's ideas	✓			
• Shows respect for members of the community of inquiry	✓			

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Course Description: *Health and Physical Education promotes an understanding of physical activity and movement, food and nutrition, health, safety, human development and human relationships.*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
HEALTH Effort Min ______●__ Max				
• Recognises and discusses stages in growth and development of the human body	✓			
• Explores and demonstrates a growing awareness of social relationships (friends/family/communities/cultures)	✓			
• Develops and understands different personal and cultural relationships	✓			
PHYSICAL EDUCATION Effort Min ______●__ Max				
• Displays sound skills	✓			
• Has developed a good level of coordination	✓			
• Displays appropriate sporting behaviour	✓			

SCIENCE

Course Description: *In Science the students will develop an understanding about: Natural and Processed Materials, The Physical World, Earth and Beyond, and Life and Living. At this level, scientific investigations require the following skills.*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min ______●__ Max				
• Predicts outcomes of, and designs and constructs simple experiments		✓		
• Writes reports on experiments and investigations		✓		
• Draws appropriate conclusions from data		✓		

TECHNOLOGY

Course Description: *Technology in the classroom involves students in generating ideas and acting on them, as well as in using and developing processes and products that satisfy human needs. Students develop the technological skills of investigation, design, production and evaluation.*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min ______●__ Max				
• Chooses techniques and materials appropriate to the required task		✓		
• Experiments with different ways to achieve outcomes		✓		
• Designs, constructs, modifies and assesses own product		✓		
• Uses the computer competently and confidently	✓			

STUDIES OF SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Course Description: *Studies of Society and the Environment develop a student's knowledge and understanding of Australian society, societies in other countries, local and global environments and the interaction of people with the environment. The skills of investigation, communication and participation are required in each area studied.*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min _____●____ Max				
• Uses maps, directories, indexes, graphs to gather information	✓			
• Presents information in a variety of ways eg. maps, charts, illustrations, graphs		✓		
• Makes judgements based on information and understanding		✓		

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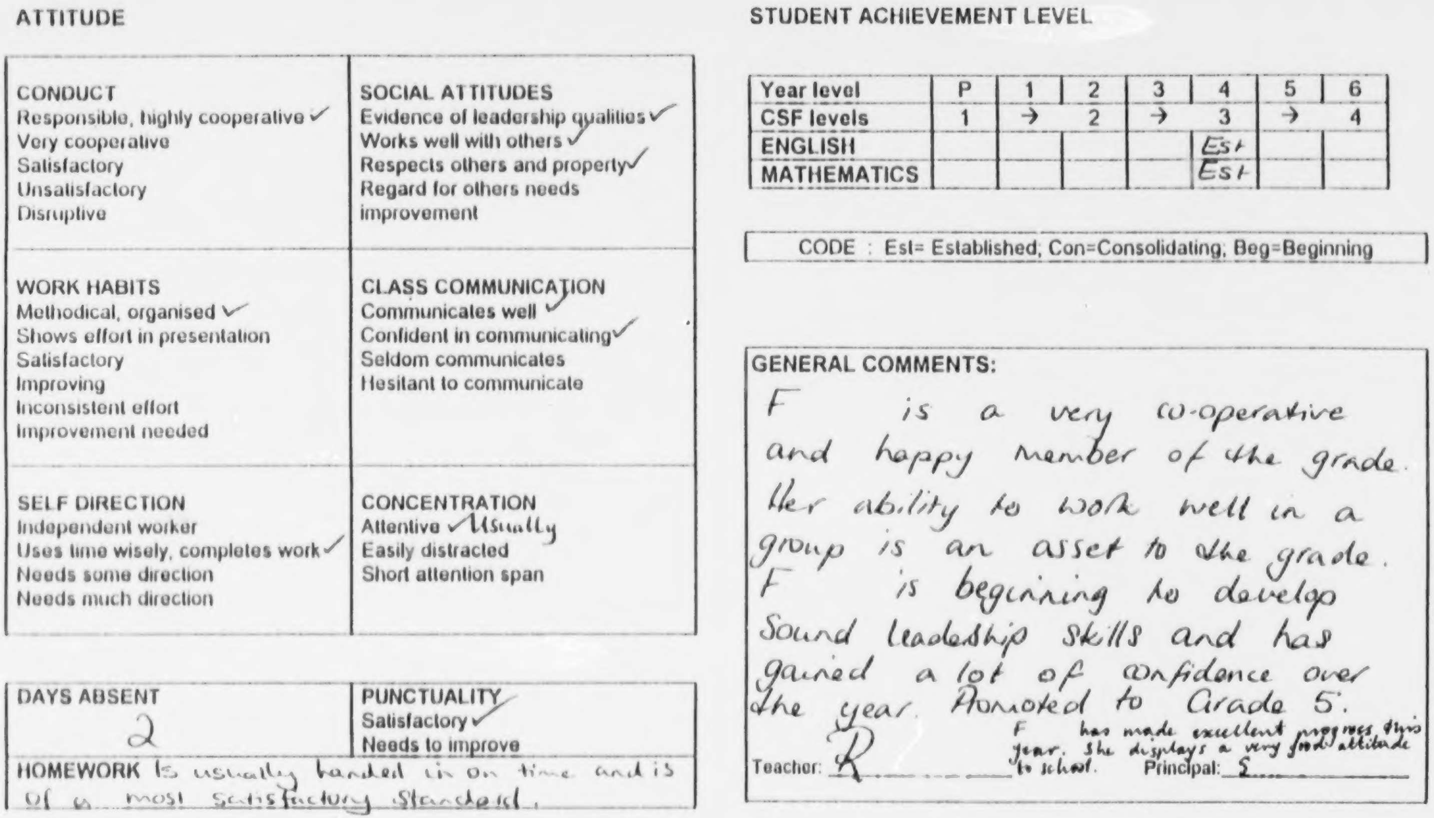

ATTITUDE

CONDUCT Responsible, highly cooperative ✓ Very cooperative Satisfactory Unsatisfactory Disruptive	**SOCIAL ATTITUDES** Evidence of leadership qualities ✓ Works well with others ✓ Respects others and property ✓ Regard for others needs improvement
WORK HABITS Methodical, organised ✓ Shows effort in presentation Satisfactory Improving Inconsistent effort Improvement needed	**CLASS COMMUNICATION** Communicates well ✓ Confident in communicating ✓ Seldom communicates Hesitant to communicate
SELF DIRECTION Independent worker Uses time wisely, completes work ✓ Needs some direction Needs much direction	**CONCENTRATION** Attentive ✓ Usually Easily distracted Short attention span

DAYS ABSENT 2	**PUNCTUALITY** Satisfactory ✓ Needs to improve

HOMEWORK Is usually handed in on time and is of a most satisfactory standard.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

Year level	P	1	2	3	4	5	6
CSF levels	1	→	2	→	3	→	4
ENGLISH					Est		
MATHEMATICS					Est		

CODE : Est= Established; Con=Consolidating; Beg=Beginning

GENERAL COMMENTS:

F is a very co-operative and happy member of the grade. Her ability to work well in a group is an asset to the grade. F is begining to develop sound leadership skills and has gained a lot of confidence over the year. Promoted to Grade 5.

Teacher: R

F has made excellent progress this year. She displays a very good attitude to school.

Principal: S

NAME F YEAR 4 LEVEL 3

LIBRARY

Effort Min ____________ Max

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
SKILLS				
• Understands and uses correct library terminology	✓			
• Can use the borrowing system for loans and returns and can shelve resources	✓			
• Uses the catalogue or computer to access resources	✓			
LITERATURE				
• Can identify and describe the main character, setting, plot and obvious theme in a story		✓		
• Explains the contribution of illustrations to a work		✓		
• Completes follow up activities	✓			
RESEARCH				
• Completes independent research activities		✓		
• Locates information using standard references	✓			
• Prepares final reports from draft notes and compiles bibliographies		✓		

ITALIAN

Effort Min ____________ Max

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
SPEAKING AND LISTENING				
• Is able to participate in story telling, games, performances, songs and sketches which are prepared and rehearsed		✓		
READING				
• Demonstrates an understanding of short texts by presenting dramatised readings which produce the desired effect on an audience through suitable pronunciation, intonation and phrasing		✓		
WRITING				
• Is able to write for projects and complete written activities with assistance		✓		

VISUAL ARTS

Effort Min ____________ Max

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
• Demonstrates an inventive and imaginative approach throughout the process of creating an artwork	✓			
• Approaches problem solving confidently	✓			
• Demonstrates appropriate manipulative skills and techniques		✓		
• Displays a positive approach to tasks		✓		
• Displays an appreciation of their own and other works of art	✓			

MUSIC

Effort Min ____________ Max

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
• Uses experience and imagination in creating and making music		✓		
• Uses and explores the basic elements of sound		✓		
• Responds to key features of musical works		✓		

SCHOOL REPORT - DECEMBER

NAME ______________________________________

GRADE LEVEL 4 YEAR __________

The statements in this report have been based on the Board of Studies Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) covering the following levels.

CSF Location

Year level	P	1	2	3	4	5	6
CSF levels	1	→	2	→	3	→	4

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2. Con The student is consolidating the skills and knowledge, often exhibiting some, but not all of the behaviours for the level (eg. displays such learning with assistance).
3. Beg The student is beginning to show signs of the skills, knowledge or behaviour pattern of the level in that only a little of the pattern is showing (eg. students occasionally and with assistance demonstrate the learning).
4. NA Progress is not apparent. The student shows none of the skills, knowledge or behaviours of the level (eg. no evidence of progress has been observed).
5. NI Not introduced at this stage.

Since there can be marked differences in the intellectual, social and physical maturity of students in the same year level, this report attempts to indicate your child's growth as an individual and not in comparison with others in the group.

We believe that effort of students is important and can be gauged by the position of the dot on the scale.

Min. ——————————————●— Max.

If you wish to discuss this report further please make an appointment with the class teacher or the principal.

NAME ______________________________ YEAR ______________ LEVEL 4

ENGLISH

Course Description:

	Est	Con	Beg	NA	NI
SPEAKING AND LISTENING Effort Min______________Max • Listens attentively • Questions and responds constructively to other points of view • Presents accurate summaries of decisions reached in group situations • Presents a point of view to a group of peers, offering some considered reasons • Selects, orders and organises subject matter clearly for spoken presentations • Uses pace, volume, pronunciation, enunciation & stress to enhance meaning • Uses body movement, facial expressions & gestures to enhance meaning					
READING Effort Min______________Max • Reads a variety of texts for pleasure, interest and information • Identifies main idea from a written passage • Uses a variety of strategies for different viewing and reading purposes eg. rereading, making notes, talking to others • Distinguishes between fact and opinion of text • Can locate responses and record details when researching a topic • Reads regularly & makes appropriate choices of reading materials • Corrects obvious errors when reading aloud • Oral reading is fluent, confident and expressive					
WRITING Effort Min______________Max • Writes fluently and creatively • Writes for a variety of purposes eg. diaries, letters, reports, stories • Uses a variety of literature and other text as a model for writing • Uses reviewing and proof reading strategies • Uses dictionary, atlas and thesaurus confidently • Recognises misspelt words and attempts corrections • Consistently spells most frequently used words • Uses correctly constructed sentences • Sequences ideas • Organises text meaningfully eg. uses paragraphs • Uses most common punctuation marks correctly • Handwriting is legible and appropriate for the audience					

COMMENTS

MATHEMATICS

Course Description:

	Est	Con	Beg	NA	NI
SPACE Effort Min______________Max • Uses geometrical language for describing & comparing figures & objects • Produces recognisable drawings of prisms, pyramids, cylinders & cones • Uses nets to make copies of prisms, pyramids, cylinders & cones • Constructs models from oral and written instructions and pictures • Uses distance, direction, co-ordinates, scale and labels in reading and making maps and plans					
NUMBER Effort Min______________Max • Applies an understanding of place value to counting, ordering, comparing and estimating when using large whole numbers, common and decimal fractions • Reads, records & orders numbers from thousandths to millions & beyond • Automatically recalls addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts • Uses appropriate strategies to estimate and perform mental calculations • Works competently & confidently with processes involving whole numbers • Works competently & confidently with processes involving decimals • Works competently & confidently with processes involving common fractions • Renames fractions (common, decimal, equivalent, percentages) • Recognises and understands prime numbers and composite numbers					
MEASUREMENT Effort Min______________Max • Reads simple scales and measures accurately using appropriate units • Prepares and accurately reads different calendars and timetables • Tells the time to one minute, analogue and digital clocks • Understands & uses methods to find perimeter & area of a square or rectangle					
CHANCE AND DATA Effort Min______________Max • Collects, organises and records data systematically using surveys, questionnaires, etc • Constructs and interprets bar & pie graphs, pictographs, line plots, etc • Makes realistic predictions and estimations about everyday events					
MATHEMATICAL TOOLS & PROCEDURES Effort Min______________Max • Uses calculators and other measuring instruments with increasing facility eg. protractors • Uses mathematical terms, symbols and notations to describe objects, situations and relationships • Uses problem solving strategies and checking procedures when calculating					

COMMENTS

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PHILOSOPHY

***Course Description**: The students are developing skills of dialogue, inquiry and logical reasoning using philosophy novels and manuals, stories or topical subjects to stimulate discussion and ideas*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min_______________Max • Is able to express ideas coherently • Is able to follow a line of reasoning and build upon the ideas of others • Respects point of view of others				

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

***Course Description**: Health and Physical Education promotes an understanding of physical activity and movement, food and nutrition, health, safety, human development and human relationships.*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
HEALTH Effort Min_______________Max • Identifies significant changes in growth and how people deal with them eg. adolescence • Formulates codes of behaviour that enhance cooperation • Assesses options and consequences in safe and unsafe situations				
PHYSICAL EDUCATION Effort Min_______________Max • Displays good skills and coordination • Displays appropriate sporting behaviour • Displays an understanding of the importance of participation in recreational pursuits				

SCIENCE

***Course Description**: In Science the students will develop an understanding about: Natural and Processed Materials, The Physical World, Earth and Beyond, and Life and living. At this level, scientific investigations require the following skills.*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min_______________Max • Can formulate reasonable hypotheses • Can test hypotheses by experimenting and observing • Can draw appropriate conclusions and report on them				

TECHNOLOGY

***Course Description**: Technology in the classroom involves students in generating ideas and acting on them, as well as in using and developing processes and products that satisfy human needs. Students develop the technological skills of investigation, design, production and evaluation.*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min_______________Max • Creates designs and translates them into products and processes • Modifies & improves designs & reports in a variety of ways • Generates and organises data on a computer				

STUDIES OF SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

***Course Description**: Studies of Society and the Environment develop a student's knowledge and understanding of Australian society, societies in other countries, local and global environments and the interaction of people with the environment. The skills of investigation, communication and participation are required in each area studied.*

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
Effort Min_______________Max • Can investigate a topic in a variety of ways eg. use of reference texts, newspapers, interpret graphs, fieldwork, survey groups, etc. • Can communicate and interpret information in a variety of ways eg. written/oral reports, photography, graphs, compile timelines, etc.				

ATTITUDE

CONDUCT Responsible, highly cooperative Very cooperative Satisfactory Unsatisfactory Disruptive	**SOCIAL ATTITUDES** Evidence of leadership qualities Works well with others Respects others and property Regard for others needs improvement
WORK HABITS Methodical, organised Shows effort in presentation Satisfactory Improving Inconsistent effort Improvement needed	**CLASS COMMUNICATION** Communicates well Confident in communicating Seldom communicates Hesitant to communicate
SELF DIRECTION Independent worker Uses time wisely, completes work Needs some direction Needs much direction	**CONCENTRATION** Attentive Easily distracted Short attention span

DAYS ABSENT	**PUNCTUALITY** Satisfactory Needs to improve
HOMEWORK	

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

Year level	P	1	2	3	4	5	6
CSF levels	1	→	2	→	3	→	4
ENGLISH							
MATHEMATICS							

CODE : Est= Established; Con=Consolidating; Beg=Beginning

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Teacher: ____________________

Principal: ____________________

NAME ______________________ YEAR __________ LEVEL 4

LIBRARY

Effort Min ______________ Max

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
SKILLS • Can shelve materials from all sections of the library • Is able to locate materials in the library including standard reference materials and check out items without assistance • Is an independent user of library resources and demonstrates advanced library skills				
LITERATURE • Can identify and describe main character, plot, setting, cause and effect and theme in a story • Completes follow up reports and activities				
RESEARCH • Locates information unassisted using standard library references • Prepares final reports from draft notes and compiles bibliographies • Completes independent research activities				

ITALIAN

Effort Min ______________ Max

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
SPEAKING AND LISTENING • Is able to participate in storytelling, games, performances, songs and sketches which are prepared and rehearsed				
READING • Demonstrates an understanding of short texts by presenting dramatised readings which produce the desired effect on an audience through suitable pronunciation, intonation and phrasing				
WRITING • Is able to write for projects and complete written activities with assistance				

VISUAL ARTS

Effort Min ______________ Max

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
• Demonstrates an inventive and imaginative approach throughout the process of creating an artwork • Approaches problem solving confidently • Demonstrates appropriate manipulative skills and techniques • Displays a positive approach to tasks • Displays an appreciation of their own and other works of art				

MUSIC

Effort Min ______________ Max

	Est	Con	Beg	NA
• Uses experience and imagination in creating and making music • Uses and explores the basic elements of sound • Draws upon a range of skills to present musical works for a variety of purposes				

Appendix 2
Brief to Authors of State and Territory Chapters

Following the nomination of one or more prospective authors for the state and territory chapters by the Director of Curriculum in each Education Department, a brief was sent to the authors to indicate the areas of material that should be covered in the chapters. The introduction to and topics mentioned in the brief are listed below.

•••••

Introductory statement

A chapter is being commissioned from each state and territory education system to describe the first stages, processes and current state of play of the implementation of variants of the Curriculum statements and profiles for Australian schools in their state. The desired length for the chapter is from 7 000 to 10 000 words. We are interested to have as much information and comment as you can provide within that length.

Scope of coverage

Topics addressed in each chapter should include, but not be limited by, the following, as part of a history of statements and profiles in each education system:

- nature, timing and extent of initial involvement with implementation:
  - including review, adaptation, how much done, what kinds of people were involved with it, how many people, rationale for doing what was done;
- nature, timing and extent of introduction of the approach to schools and teachers:
  - how many schools, what was done, evaluative comment;
- subsequent implementation steps undertaken and/or planned;
- nature of support materials prepared:
  - what materials, for whom, how and when distributed, who prepared them, using what processes;
- other support activities for principals and teachers;
- assessment procedures being used or advocated for use as part of the implementation;

- initiatives to relate 'key competencies' to the work with statements and profiles, especially in assessment and reporting;
- developments in progress with technologies to support implementation of the profiles:
  - e.g. computer programs, CD-Roms: purposes, evaluative comments;
- descriptions of two or three exemplary practices currently taking place in schools:
  - e.g. pilot projects, focus schools, evaluative comment;
- anticipated emphases for 1996 and 1997.

Appendix 3 Questionnaires

Background Paper - Teacher Questionnaire

Teacher Questionnaire

School Information Sheet

Australian Council for Educational Research

ASSESSMENT IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

Background Paper - Teacher Questionnaire

State and Territory Variations

(Part V)

Statements and profiles in their various forms have provided educators with a common focus in terms of student outcomes and are currently being used as a basis for curriculum development and assessment review in States and Territories across Australia. The titles of State variations of profiles are listed below.

ACT	ACT Curriculum Frameworks and National Profiles
NSW	*implementation on hold in Government schools*
NT	Common Curriculum Statement; Common Assessment Statement
Qld	Student Performance Standards (English and Maths only)
SA	Curriculum Statements and Profiles for Australian Schools
Tas	National Statements and Curriculum Profiles
Vic	Curriculum Standards Framework
WA	Student Outcome Statements

Part V of the current survey asks you to indicate your familiarity with and rate the usefulness of resource documents relevant to your State for each of the learning areas.

Space is then left for you to list other resource documents or any other publications relevant to profiles that you have had access to and would like to comment on.

Key Competencies

(Part VI)

There are also State and Territory variations in the degree to which Mayer's key competencies are being developed. In 1992, the Mayer Committee examined the link between post-compulsory education and training, and industry needs. The report outlined 'key competencies' which are regarded as essential 'for effective participation in the emerging patterns of work and work organisation' as well as other social and educational settings. The key competencies include:

- Collecting, analysing and organising information
- Communicating ideas and information
- Planning and organising activities
- Working with others and in teams
- Using mathematical ideas and techniques
- Solving problems
- Using technology, and
- Using an understanding of cultures (in development)

A 'competency-based approach' focuses on what a person can do, rather than on the means by which the competencies are learnt, and is consistent with student outcomes as defined in curriculum profiles. Mayer suggested that elements of profiles which link with key competencies could be identified at all year levels for assessment and reporting.

Part VI asks you to indicate your familiarity (prior to this survey) with the Mayer Committee's proposed key competencies.

Part IX asks you to indicate the current or possible inclusion of class activities, with examples, which cover each of the key competencies outlined in the report and to indicate whether you explicitly assess and report on these competencies.

Australian Council for Educational Research

ASSESSMENT IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

Teacher Questionnaire

I BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1 **Your position in the school:**

- Subject Coordinator ☐
- Classroom teacher ☐
- Year level Coordinator ☐

2 **Main teaching subjects and year levels you are teaching in 1996:**

- Lower Primary (to Yr 4) ☐
- Upper Primary (5 to 6/7) ☐
- Junior Secondary (6/7-10) ☐
- Senior Secondary (11-12/13) ☐

- All/almost all learning areas ☐
- The Arts ☐
- English ☐
- Health & Physical Education ☐
- Languages other than English ☐
- Mathematics ☐
- Science ☐
- Studies of Society & Environment ☐
- Technology ☐

3 **Years of teaching experience:**

up to 5 ☐ 6-12 ☐ 13-20 ☐ over 20 ☐

II IMPLEMENTATION OF PROFILES

1 **Emphases - 1995**

In what learning areas and in what ways were you involved in implementing profiles at your school in 1995? *(tick as many as apply)*

	Familiarising yourself	Planning/ programming	Assessing according to profile outcome statements	Reporting to parents
• The Arts	☐	☐	☐	☐
• English	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Health & Physical Education	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Languages other than English	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Science	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Studies of Society & Environment	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Technology	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you used profiles for reporting in 1995 please indicate at which year level/s.
(please circle)

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2 **Emphases - 1996**

In what learning areas and in what ways are you involved in implementing profiles at your school in 1996? *(tick as many as apply)*

	Familiarising yourself	Planning/ programming	Assessing according to profile outcome statements	Reporting to parents
• The Arts	☐	☐	☐	☐
• English	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Health & Physical Education	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Languages other than English	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Science	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Studies of Society & Environment	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Technology	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you are using profiles for reporting in 1996 please indicate at which year level/s. *(please circle)*

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3 **Please rate the extent of your commitment to the use of profile outcome statements in 1996 relative to other school priorities.**

High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐

4 **What will be your personal priorities with respect to profiles in 1996?** *(please list in order of your own priorities)*

1. (main priority)..

2...

3...

III IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1 **What strategies have been used at your school to support teachers in their use of profiles?** *(tick as many as apply)*

a) Provision of documents ☐
b) General staff meetings ☐
c) Meetings with key staff members ☐
d) Allocation of a key leadership position to support staff ☐
e) Collaborative planning and programming ☐
f) Setting aside pupil-free days ☐
g) Provision of relief teachers ☐
h) Staff supported to attend training and development programs ☐
i) Involving parents/parent groups ☐
j) Working jointly with another school/group of schools ☐
k) Other .... ☐

2 **Please circle the letters below to indicate up to THREE of the above strategies that have been most useful to you.**

a b c d e f g h i j k

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3 **Please circle the letters below to indicate up to THREE of the above strategies that would be of use but have not yet been implemented.**

a b c d e f g h i j k

4 **What, if any, computer technology is in place at your school to support the use of profiles?**

....

....

5 **Your use of computer technology**

Please indicate if you have personally used computer technology in your work with profiles and for what purpose:

I have not used this technology.		☐
I have used this technology for the purpose of:	Planning	☐
	Assessment	☐
	Record keeping	☐
	Reporting	☐
	Other....................................	
	....	

If you have used computer technology in your work with profiles please rate it on the following criteria:

	Very good	Fair	Unsatisfactory
Access to computers	☐	☐	☐
Ease of use of the program	☐	☐	☐
Time taken to use the program	☐	☐	☐
Usefulness of the program	☐	☐	☐

What, if any, added features or improvements to this technology would you like to see?

....

....

IV YOUR USE OF STANDARDISED OR DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

In addition to any Statewide testing programs, which (if any) standardised or diagnostic tests do you personally use? *(please indicate name of test/s and year level/s)*

....

....

....

What is your main purpose for using the test/s?

....

....

....

Are the results from these tests reported to parents?

....

....

V TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN RELATION TO PROFILES

1 What formal training and development programs in relation to profiles have you undertaken in the past 3 or 4 years? *(tick as many as apply)*

- National Professional Development Program ☐

  (please specify) ....

  ....

- Subject-based Teaching Associations (eg History Teachers Association, Science Teachers Association) (Non-NPDP) ☐

  (please specify) ....

  ....

- Professional development in school (Non-NPDP) ☐

  (please specify) ....

  ....

- Other ☐

  (please specify) ....

  ....

2 What types of training activities in relation to profiles have been of most value to you? *(tick as many as apply)*

Focus of training:
- Curriculum mapping/auditing/aligning ☐
- Assessment methods ☐
- Technology training ☐
- Program planning ☐
- Reporting to parents ☐
- Classroom practice ☐
- Assessing according to profile outcome statements ☐
- Other *(please indicate)*..

  ....

3 What (further) training and development in relation to profiles would you like to undertake?

Learning area/s: ....

Focus of training:
- Curriculum mapping/auditing/aligning ☐
- Assessment methods ☐
- Technology training ☐
- Program planning ☐
- Reporting to parents ☐
- Classroom practice ☐
- Assessing according to profile outcome statements ☐
- Other *(please indicate)*..

  ....

VI RESOURCE DOCUMENTS (You may need to refer to the Background Information Sheet)

1 **Please indicate how useful you have found the resources as applicable for your State. List any further resources relevant to profiles that you have used.**

Your State's variation of Profiles in the following learning areas:	Have not yet seen	Very useful	Moderately useful	Not very useful	Not at all useful
The Arts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
English	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health & Physical Education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
LOTE	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Science	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Studies of Society & Environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technology	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Mayer Committee's proposed Key Competencies for Australian Schools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Other *(please describe)*					
•	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2 **What do you see as the greatest need for further resource materials on profiles?**

Learning area/s: ....

Content of resources: *(tick as many as apply)*

• Examples of program units	☐	• Assessment examples and tools	☐
• Samples of student work	☐	• Report proformas and examples	☐
• Parent friendly information	☐	• Organising learning activities	☐

• Other *(please indicate)*..

....

....

VII YOUR ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING PRACTICES

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your current teaching, assessment and reporting practices?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Profiles have had little influence on how I assess my students' learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Profiles have had little influence on how I report my students' progress to parents.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have not needed to change my assessment and reporting practices - they were already largely in line with the profiles.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Profiles have meant I now know more about the school's program overall.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Profiles have given me a clearer sense of direction in what I am teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Profiles have meant I am more confident in making judgements about the learning outcomes of my students.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Profiles have made me more involved with other teachers at the school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Profiles have made me more enthusiastic about my work as a teacher.	☐	☐	☐	☐

VIII GENERAL EVALUATION

1 **How useful do you believe profiles have been/will be for assessment and reporting purposes for the following (as appropriate for the year level/s you teach):**

	Highly useful	Useful	Marginally useful	Not useful
Yourself	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parents	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employers	☐	☐	☐	☐

2 **How could profiles be made more useful for any of the above mentioned groups?**

....

....

....

....

3 **What do you think have been the most beneficial features associated with the use of profiles in your school?** *(tick as many as apply)*

- Curriculum review ☐
- Teaching/learning focus ☐
- Assessment/reporting review ☐
- Working with other teachers/schools ☐
- Common framework for reporting ☐
- Other *(please indicate)* ....

....

4 **What concerns do you have regarding the use of profiles at your school?**
(tick as many as apply)

- Amount of time required ☐
- Parental understanding ☐
- Lack of resources/training ☐
- Timeline for implementation ☐
- Negativity of some staff ☐
- Other *(please indicate)* ....

....

5 **In what ways could teaching and learning at your school be better organised to facilitate the implementation of profiles?**

....

....

....

Please use the space below if you would like to offer more comments about the implementation of profiles in Australian schools.

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

Please turn over ☞

IX KEY COMPETENCIES (You may need to refer to the Background Information Sheet)

Please indicate whether your current teaching program, and assessment and reporting, explicitly incorporate each of the Mayer Committee's proposed Key Competencies. Please give examples as appropriate in the space below each competency and specify the relevant learning area/s.

COMPETENCIES:	Already covered in program	Could be covered in program	Assessed & reported on	Under consideration for reporting
Collecting/analysing/organising information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learning area/s				
Example/s				
Communicating ideas and information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learning area/s				
Example/s				
Planning and organising activities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learning area/s				
Example/s				
Working with others and in teams	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learning area/s				
Example/s				
Using mathematical ideas and techniques	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learning area/s				
Example/s				
Solving problems	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learning area/s				
Example/s				
Using technology	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learning area/s				
Example/s				
Using an understanding of cultures	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learning area/s				
Example/s				

- Please attach an extra sheet if you need more space to answer this question. -

If you are currently using the profiles as a basis for reporting student achievement and/or progress, we would be pleased if you could provide an example. Guarantee of confidentiality No teacher or student will be identified in the report of the study, and your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

Australian Council for Educational Research

ASSESSMENT IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

School Information Sheet

We would appreciate the completion of this form by the principal or deputy principal and its return along with teacher questionnaires as soon as possible.

I BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1 **How many students are enrolled in your school?** ....

2 **Which year levels does your school cater for?** *(please circle)*

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

3 **For the school overall, please indicate the approximate percentage of:**

- students who come from an Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander background; ....
- students who have been assessed as having an intellectual, physical, sensory or behavioural disability to a degree that entitles them to receive special education support; ....
- students who come from a home background in which the main language spoken is a language other than English. ....

4 **Does your school receive Disadvantaged Schools Component Funds under the National Equity Program for Schools?** *(please circle)* Yes No

II IMPLEMENTATION OF PROFILES

1 **Timing**

In what year did your school begin introducing profiles (including familiarisation)?

....

2 **Emphases - 1995**

In what learning areas and in what ways did your school implement profiles in 1995?
(tick as many as apply)

	Familiarisation for staff	Planning/ programming	Assessing according to profile outcome statements	Reporting to parents
• The Arts	☐	☐	☐	☐
• English	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Health & Physical Education	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Languages other than English	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Science	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Studies of Society & Environment	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Technology	☐	☐	☐	☐

If profiles were used for reporting in 1995 please indicate at which year level/s.
(please circle)

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please rate the extent of your commitment to the use of profile outcome statements in 1995 relative to other school priorities.

High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐

What was/were the main area/s of focus for your school with respect to profiles implementation in 1995? *(please list in order of priority)*

1. (main priority)..

2...

3...

3 **Emphases - 1996**

In what learning areas and in what ways is your school implementing profiles in 1996? *(tick as many as apply)*

	Familiarisation for staff	Planning/ programming	Assessing according to profile outcome statements	Reporting to parents
• The Arts	☐	☐	☐	☐
• English	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Health & Physical Education	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Languages other than English	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Science	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Studies of Society & Environment	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Technology	☐	☐	☐	☐

If profiles will be used for reporting in 1996 please indicate at which year level/s. *(please circle)*

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please rate the extent of your commitment to the use of profile outcome statements in 1996 relative to other school priorities.

High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐

What is/are the main area/s of focus for your school with respect to profiles in 1996? *(please list in order of priority)*

1. (main priority)..

2...

3...

4 **What, if any, computer technology has been used at your school to support the use of profiles?** *(please indicate if computers are used for planning, assessment, record keeping and/or reporting purposes)*

....

....

....

....

5 **In addition to Statewide testing programs, which (if any) standardised or diagnostic tests are used at your school?** *(please indicate name of test, relevant year level/s and purpose of the test)*

....

....

....

....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

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Major changes in the emphases of education programs in Australian schools have occurred since 1986. The states and territories collaborated to define the general content for a national curriculum in eight 'key learning areas'. At the same time, they developed a common framework for describing what students have learned in relation to that curriculum.

Describing Learning: Implementation of Curriculum Profiles in Australian Schools 1986-1996 presents a comprehensive picture of the key people, decisions, events, problems and successes as the states and territories embarked on making the new 'outcomes-based' approach a reality for teachers and students. The book contains:

- a detailed chapter from each state and territory education system;
- results from a 1996 national survey of principals and teachers;
- commentary and insights collected from teachers during school visits; and
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ISBN 0-86431-224-5

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